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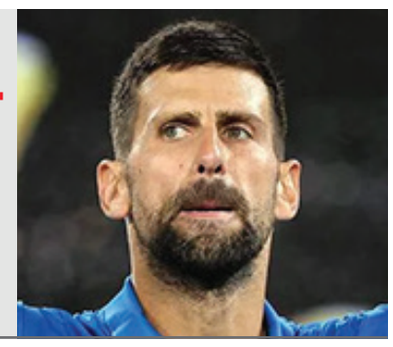

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SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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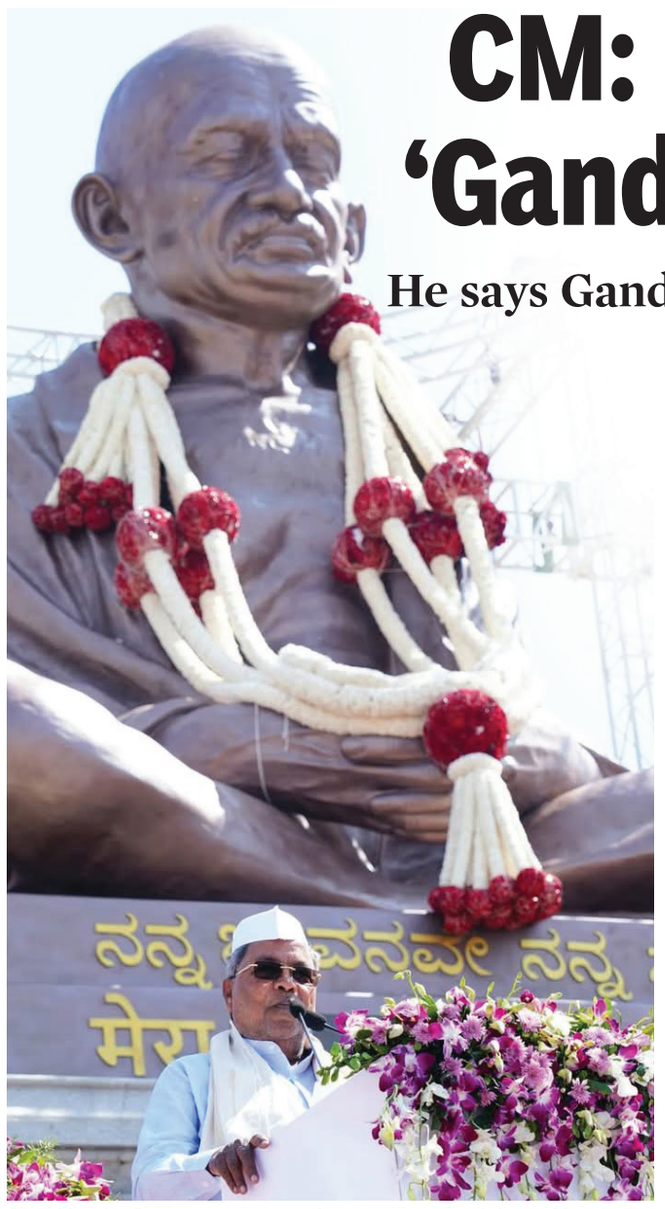
CM: Cong believes 'Gandhi's Hindutva'

He says Gandhi wanted Hindu, Muslim unity



Chief Minister Siddaramaiah during the unveiling of a statue of Mahatma Gandhi in Belagavi on Tuesday **PHOTO: SALAR**

BELAGAVI, 21 JAN

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Tuesday said Mahatma Gandhi was a diehard Hindu and the Congress believes in "Gandhi's Hindutva".

BJP always projected Mahatma Gandhi as 'anti-Hindu' but one must understand that it is 100 per cent false, Siddaramaiah said at the inauguration of Mahatma Gandhi's statue in front of Suvarna Vidhana Soudha in Belagavi.

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge, Wayanad MP Priyanka Gandhi, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, top Congress functionaries such as KC Venugopal, Randeep Singh Surjewala, Congress ministers, MPs and legislators participated in the event.

The event was organised to commemorate the centenary of the lone Congress session in which Mahatma Gandhi had chaired as the Congress president way back in 1924.

The Chief Minister said, "Mahatma Gandhi used to utter the name of Lord Rama, always. When Nathuram Godse assassinated him, he uttered 'Hey Ram'. There cannot be a better example of it. He was a diehard Hindu."

According to him, Gandhi was never against Hindu faith but he wished to bring reform in Hinduism. He always wanted to see Hindus and Muslims live like brothers.

Gandhi did not limit himself to the freedom struggle but gave guidelines on governance and explained how the ministers should conduct themselves, Siddaramaiah explained.

"We believe in Mahatma Gandhi's Hindutva and they (BJP) believe in dividing the society. They are 'Manuvadis'. We believe in the Indian constitution and BJP goes against the Congress ideology. So we must protect the constitution and save democracy. If we protect the constitution, then it would protect us," the Chief Minister said.

Siddaramaiah also charged that the BJP attempted for the past many years to weaken the constitution. Speaking on the occasion, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said there would have been anarchy in the country if there was no constitution in the country.

"This is the reason that these days people remember Gandhiji and appreciate him. People hail him for his work, his sacrifices and contributions," he said. *—PTI*

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DOLLAR REPLACEMENT

Trump threatens 100% tariffs on BRICS nation

WASHINGTON, 21 JAN

In a bold ultimatum, President Donald Trump announced on Monday that should the countries part of the BRICS bloc attempt to replace the US dollar as the global currency, a 100 per cent tariff on their trade with the United States would be imposed.

Speaking on his second day in office, Trump made the remarks while addressing a host of issues, including foreign policy and immigration. The BRICS nations, comprising Russia, India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iran and the United Arab Emirates, have been warned previously about a potential dollar replacement.

Additionally, the President said that any nation even contemplating the reduction of the dollar's use in global trade would face the severe economic penalties.

> **If the BRICS nations want to do that, that's okay, but we're going to put at least a 100 per cent tariff on the business they do with the United States**
>
> -Donald Trump, President, USA

This is not the first time Trump has taken aim at the BRICS, with his administration issuing a warning in December that 100 per cent tariffs would be implemented if countries backed a new BRICS currency. Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar had swiftly countered, dismissing any proposal to de-dollarise. Meanwhile, Trump also touched on the topic of immigration during his address on Monday, stating that he is open to increased legal immigration as a means of supporting the expansion of manufacturing in the US, driven by his tariff policies. *—PTI*

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14 Naxalites killed near Chhattisgarh border

Security personnel after an encounter with Naxalites in Bijapur, Chhattisgarh on Friday **PHOTO: PTI**

GARIABAND, 21 JAN

Fourteen Naxals, including a top CPI (Maoists) leader who was carrying a reward of Rs 1 crore, were killed in a joint operation by central and state police forces along the Chhattisgarh-Odisha border.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah Tuesday termed the encounter as "another mighty blow to Naxalism" and asserted the Narendra Modi government's resolve for a Naxal-free India and the joint efforts of the security forces to eliminate the menace from the country.

Chhattisgarh's Gariaband district superintendent of police Nikhil Rakhecha said of the deceased, one has been identified as Ramachandra Reddy alias Jairam alias Chalpati, a central committee member of the CPI (Maoist), who was carrying a bounty of Rs 1 crore. He hailed from Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh.

The identity of the remaining cadres was yet to be ascertained.

Inspector General of Police, Raipur Range Amresh Mishra told PTI that 14 Naxalites were killed during the operation and intermittent exchange of firing was still underway in the area and more details are expected on Wednesday.

On Monday, a CoBRA commando was injured, while a jawan belonging to the SOG of Odisha Police sustained injuries on Tuesday, Mishra said. *—PTI*

₹7.5L CR LOST AS BEAR RUN GRIPS MKT

NEW DELHI, 21 JAN

Investors suffered a massive loss of Rs 7.52 lakh crore on Tuesday as the stock markets plummeted, with the BSE Sensex falling by over 1,235 points. The market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies dropped to Rs 4,24,07,205.81 crore (approximately USD 4.90 trillion).

The 30-share BSE Sensex closed at 75,838.36, a decline of 1,235.08 points or 1.60%. It reached an intraday low of 75,641.87, after peaking at 77,337.36 earlier in the day. Market sentiment was negatively impacted by uncertainties surrounding President Trump's tariff proposals, a selloff by foreign institutional investors, and disappointing third-quarter earnings. Zomato led the losses among Sensex stocks, plummeting 10.92 per cent following weak earnings, while NTPC, Adani Ports, and Reliance also faced significant declines. *—PTI*

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Vivek Ramaswamy's DOGE run ends

WASHINGTON, 21 JAN

Indian American entrepreneur-turned-politician Vivek Ramaswamy announced on Monday that he is resigning from the newly established Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) as he prepares to run for Governor of Ohio.

In a post on X, Ramaswamy, 39, expressed pride in supporting DOGE's creation, stating, "I'm confident that Elon & team will succeed in streamlining the government." The initiative was introduced by President Donald Trump following his unexpected win in the November 2024 presidential election, with Tesla owner Elon Musk and Ramaswamy tasked with leading the agency. *—PTI*

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In 1st trip, European Commission Prez to visit India

Brussels, 21 Jan

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen will go to India for the first trip of her new term to shore up relations with the world's largest democracy, she said Tuesday. Speaking at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, von der Leyen said Europe was an increasingly attractive partner from Africa to Asia. "Hence, the first trip of my new Commission will be to India," she said. "Together with Prime Minister [Narendra] Modi we want to upgrade the strategic partnership with the largest country and democracy in the world." The EU is keen to intensify talks on a trade agreement with India, especially now that protectionist U.S. President Donald Trump is back in the White House — although New Delhi is known to be a tough negotiating partner.
—Courtesy, Politico

Saif Ali Khan walks out of hospital 5 days after knife attack

MUMBAI, 21 JAN

Bollywood actor Saif Ali Khan has been discharged from Lilavati Hospital, five days after being repeatedly stabbed by a Bangladeshi intruder in his Bandra apartment on 16 January. The 54-year-old actor underwent emergency surgery following the attack, which left him with multiple stab wounds, including one to his spine.

Clad in a white shirt and blue jeans, Khan was seen exiting the hospital with a cast on his hand, waving to fans and the media. His wife, actress Kareena Kapoor Khan, was present at the hospital prior to his discharge.

PHOTO: PTI

Following his release, Khan returned to his residence, 'Satguru Sharan', located nearby. The attacker, identified as Shariful Islam Shehzad Mohammad Rohilla Amin Fakir, aged 30, has been arrested. He allegedly entered Khan's flat through a bathroom window with intentions of theft. During a confrontation, Khan managed to restrain him, prompting the assailant to repeatedly stab the actor to escape.

The police have confirmed that Fakir, who had been living in Mumbai for over five months, is from Jhalokathi district in Bangladesh. They found his fingerprints at the crime scene, including the point of entry.

After reconstructing the crime scene, a court has remanded the suspect in custody for five days. *—PTI*

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TOP ISRAEL GENERAL QUITS AMID WEST BANK OPERATION

JERUSALEM, 21 JAN

Israel's Chief of Staff, Lt. Gen. Herzi Halevi, resigned on Tuesday, citing security and intelligence failures linked to Hamas' unexpected attack on 7 October, 2023, which escalated the ongoing war in Gaza. His resignation, effective 6 March, comes in the wake of a military offensive in Jenin, which has reportedly resulted in at least six Palestinian deaths and 35 injuries.

Halevi stated in his resignation letter that the military had "failed in its mission to defend the State of Israel." The October attack by Hamas left approximately 1,200 people dead, predominantly civilians, with around 90 hostages still believed to be in Gaza.

Simultaneously, Israel announced a "significant and broad military operation" targeting Palestinian militants in Jenin. This follows a fragile ceasefire in Gaza aimed at releasing hostages in exchange for Palestinian prisoners in Israeli custody. However, Israeli operations in the West Bank have continued, leading to increased violence from both sides.

The ceasefire does not apply to the West Bank, where violence has surged despite ongoing Israeli raids. Criticism is mounting against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu from his far-right coalition partners regarding the ceasefire. Amidst this turmoil, the conflict's toll has been devastating, with over 47,000 Palestinian casualties reported in Gaza, predominantly women and children. *—PTI*

RICH DRIVE EMISSIONS

Tax super-rich, fund just & green future: Greenpeace at WEF

DAVOS, 21 JAN

In a rare occurrence, rights group Greenpeace on Tuesday put up a poster inside the main venue of the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting here, calling for taxing the super-rich.

"Tax the super rich. Fund a just & green future," read the yellow poster with black letters held by two volunteers in green T-shirts on a balcony right outside the Congress hall minutes before the opening plenary was to begin there.

- Earlier on Monday, Greenpeace activists from various countries blocked the arrivals of the participants of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland at the Lago heliport.

Greenpeace International, whose executive director Mads Christensen is participating in the meeting, is an independent campaigning organisation that uses non-violent creative confrontation to expose environmental problems.

Earlier on Monday, Greenpeace activists from various countries blocked the arrivals of the participants of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland at the Lago heliport.

In a statement, Greenpeace said, "As the planet burns and the rich grow richer, the link between inequality and environmental destruction becomes undeniable.

"The richest 1 per cent are responsible for more emissions than 66 per cent of the world's population, polluting and plundering the planet for their own gain," it said.

Greenpeace called for tackling the root causes of inequality to save the planet.

"There is enough money for a green and fair world but it's just in the wrong pockets. It's time to make rich polluting elites pay. "We urge governments to tax the super-rich now and use those funds to support people and protect the planet," it said *—PTI*

>>>More on Pages 3 & 6

Volunteers hold a banner, put up by rights group Greenpeace at the main venue of WEF Annual Meeting 2025, in Switzerland **PHOTO: PTI**

PHOTO: X

Hotels condemn meat sale ban at Aero India show

BENGALURU, 21 JAN

Bengaluru has been thrust into the midst of a heated debate over a proposed ban on the sale of meat, chicken, and fish within a 13-kilometre radius of Yelahanka Air Force Station. The Bruhat Bengaluru Hotels Association (BBHA), representing nearly 5,000 hotels and restaurants, has condemned the move, labelling it "unscientific". The decision, issued by the Indian Air Force, is set to take effect from 27 January to 17 February in a bid to prevent bird strikes during the upcoming Aero India Show.

—Salar News

B'luru police arrest 'occultist' for ₹8L jewellery theft

BENGALURU, 21 JAN

The Bommanahalli police have arrested a man for allegedly robbing a woman of jewellery worth Rs 8 lakh after enticing her with a promise to perform a ritual to eliminate negative energy from her home.

The incident occurred last Wednesday when the suspect, disguised as an occultist, knocked on the door of a woman residing in Satish Reddy Layout, Bommanahalli. Claiming to be a spiritual practitioner, he convinced her that black magic had been cast on her house and needed urgent removal to prevent misfortune. The accused allegedly persuaded the woman to hand over jewellery weighing approximately 100 grams, which he placed in a cloth bag as part of the ritual. After completing the puja, he swapped the bag containing the jewellery for one filled with rice before fleeing the scene. Following the woman's complaint, police launched an investigation.

—Salar News

Darshan's gun licence suspended amid murder case

BENGALURU, 21 JAN

The City Police have temporarily suspended the gun licence of actor Darshan in connection with the ongoing Renukaswamy murder case. The suspension is effective immediately and will remain until the case is resolved, the police confirmed on Tuesday. As per orders, the Rajarajeshwari Nagar Police have seized the firearm registered in Darshan's name. The actor, currently out on bail, is one of the main accused in the murder case. Concerns arose that his licensed firearm could potentially be used to influence or intimidate witnesses, which prompted the police to issue a notice requiring him to justify the continuation of his gun license. In his response, Darshan, a prominent public figure, argued that his frequent exposure to large crowds during public engagements necessitated the use of a firearm for personal safety.

—Salar News

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge and party MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra exchange greetings as Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy CM DK Shivakumar look on, in Belagavi; Congress supporters attend the 'Gandhi Bharat' event in Belagavi

PHOTO: PTI

NO GOVT INSULTED AMBEDKAR LIKE AMIT SHAH: PRIYANKA

In Belagavi, she accused BJP of attempting to weaken Constitution

BELAGAVI, 21 JAN

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Tuesday condemned Union Home Minister Amit Shah for what she termed an unprecedented insult to the Constitution and its architect, BR Ambedkar, within Parliament.

Speaking at the 'Gandhi Bharat' event in Belagavi, organised to commemorate the centenary of Mahatma Gandhi's only Congress session in 1924, Vadra accused the BJP of attempting to "weaken" the Constitution and its institutions.

The event, themed "Jai Bapu, Jai Bhim, Jai Samvidhan," specifically targeted Shah for recent remarks that she interpreted as demeaning to both Ambedkar and the framework of the nation. Vadra expressed that no one could have imagined a day when Ambedkar would be insulted in such a manner, deeming it an affront to the nation and its freedom fighters.

Vadra further alleged that the BJP, as the ideological offspring of the RSS, felt emboldened to disrespect Ambedkar and the Constitution. She asserted that the BJP's actions and policies—aimed at undermining social justice and the judiciary—were contrary to the values enshrined in the Constitution.

Asserting that Modi and Shah are "anti-Constitution," she highlighted various amendments and policies introduced by the BJP that she believed jeopardised rights, including those of farmers and women. Vadra concluded by warning that the BJP's "anti-constitutional" policies would adversely affect daily life for the citizens of India.

—Salar News

Deputy CM DK Shivakumar with CM Siddaramaiah during the unveiling of Mahatma Gandhi statue in Belagavi on Tuesday

PHOTO: SALAR

'Priyanka is Stree & RaGa Yuva Shakti'

BELAGAVI, 21 JAN

The Karnataka Congress party celebrated the centenary of Mahatma Gandhi's presidency of the party with a grand event in Belagavi, bordering Maharashtra. Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge unveiled a statue of the legendary leader, accompanied by Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, and other senior Congress functionaries, including Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar and Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra.

Kharge on Tuesday said Lok Sabha MP Priyanka represented 'Stree Shakti' and likened her with historic freedom fighters Kittur Rani Chennamma and 'Jhansi Ki Rani' Lakshmi Bai.

Kharge also hailed Rahul Gandhi as a symbol of 'Yuva Shakti'.

Themed as 'Jai Bapu, Jai Bhim, Jai Samvidhan', the event targetted Union Home Minister Amit Shah for "insulting" the Indian Constitution and its architect BR Ambedkar in the Rajya Sabha recently. The Union Minister has dismissed the allegation as a "lie".

Kharge also recalled Gandhi's famous statement delivered in Belagavi, "Main Jinda Rahna chahta hoon Bharat ke liye, Marna chahta hoon Bharat ke liye (I want to live for India and die for India)".

He claimed that Nathuram Godse, who assassinated Gandhi, was the disciple of Hindutva ideologue Vinayak Damodar Savarkar.

Though Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Amit Shah show respect to Gandhi, they worship Godse, he added.

The Congress veteran also accused the BJP of "playing a game" by alleging differences between Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Gandhi and Ambedkar.

Meanwhile, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi was forced to skip the event due to health concerns, according to party sources.

—PTI

Were there no rapes under BJP: CM

- His comments came in response to BJP allegations regarding the deteriorating law and order situation in the state, following the recent rape of a woman at KR Market in Bengaluru. The victim, who was waiting for a bus to Yelahanka.

BENGALURU/BELAGAVI, 21 JAN

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has challenged the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to reflect on their tenure, questioning whether incidents of rape were absent during their rule. His comments came in response to BJP allegations regarding the deteriorating law and order situation in the state, following the recent rape of a woman at KR Market in Bengaluru.

The victim, who was waiting for a bus to Yelahanka, was allegedly assaulted by two men, who have since been arrested.

Bengaluru Police Commissioner B Dayananda reported that the incident, which occurred in SJ Park, involved both extortion and sexual assault.

Addressing the media in Belagavi, Siddaramaiah stated, "Haven't rapes taken place during the BJP regime?" He emphasised the importance of protecting women, asserting that rapes should never occur. "Anti-social elements in society perpetrate such crimes. We will take stringent action against them," he added.

BJP has demanded the resignation of Home Minister G Parameshwara, claiming an increase in robbery and murder.

—PTI

DKS LABELS BJP AS 'GODSE' PARTY

BELAGAVI, 21 JAN

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar praised Mahatma Gandhi ahead of the 'Jai Bapu, Jai Bhim, Jai Samvidhan' rally in Belagavi, marking 100 years since Gandhi presided over a Congress session in 1924. He took aim at the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), labelling it the "Godse" party, and accused its members of lacking an understanding of sacrifices made during India's freedom struggle.

"I do not want to comment any further about the BJP, they know nothing of the freedom movement. We do not want to hear whatever the Godse party is saying," Shivakumar stated. He emphasised that the rally is not only a Congress event but a celebration of Gandhi's enduring values that resonate worldwide.

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge and MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra are attending the rally, which was postponed after the passing of former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. Kharge noted that the event aims to convey a message to the central BJP government while asserting that any misinterpretation of Babasaheb Ambedkar's Constitution will not be tolerated.

—ANI

BJP's Munirathna booked for demolition of slum in City

BENGALURU, 21 JAN

Rajarajeshwari Nagar MLA R Munirathna is facing fresh legal troubles after an FIR was lodged against him and six associates at the RMC Yard police station. The allegations arise from a purported land grabbing incident and assault during a "forceful" demolition at the Akkamahadevi slum in Peenya on Monday.

Residents report that at approximately 10 am, a group of men arrived with two JCB machines, demanding they vacate their makeshift homes. Ganga, a slum dweller for over two-and-a-half years, recounted, "They started demolishing our houses and taking our valuables. We were just told to leave, with no prior warning or explanation."

Several residents allege that Munirathna was present during the demolition but failed to halt the destruction.

R Munirathna

PHOTO: X

Govinda, another resident, expressed frustration, stating, "We asked him to stop and give us some time, but he told us to gather our valuables and leave immediately."

Women from the slum also reported being manhandled by Munirathna's associates during the incident. They claimed they were kicked and pushed while pleading for intervention.

The residents assert that they have occupied the area for over three years, having received temporary permission from Munirathna, who had claimed the land belonged to a college. Govinda added, "We were told it was a temporary arrangement."

Following the demolition, families found themselves devastated, having lost their meagre possessions. A complaint was subsequently filed with the RMC Yard police, leading to charges of unlawful assembly, assault, and violations under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act against Munirathna and his associates.

This incident marks the latest controversy for Munirathna, who previously faced arrest in September 2024 over a rape allegation and other serious charges. The MLA has not yet publicly commented on these recent allegations.

—Salar News

Five held in pregnant cow beheading case

UTTARA KANNADA, 21 JAN

In a disturbing incident, a pregnant cow was beheaded, its calf mutilated, and its legs removed in a forest area near Honnavara, Uttara Kannada district, Karnataka. The cow's body was taken away, leaving behind its severed head, legs, and the maimed calf. The perpetrators, who are yet to be apprehended, left the gruesome scene in Kondakuli village, Salkodu.

According to Superintendent of Police M Narayana, ten suspects have been identified, and five have been taken into custody for questioning. Six special investigation teams have been formed, and police have gathered clues to track down the main culprits who are at large.

Describing the act as "gruesome", Superintendent Narayana assured that efforts are being made to apprehend the offenders, with support from local inquiries and the forest department.

—Salar News

COPS DENY GANGRAPE

Woman robbed and assaulted in KR Market

BENGALURU, 21 JAN

- The suspects, both transient workers, often spent the night on pavements in the City Market area. The incident occurred on Sunday while the victim was heading to her brother's house.

Bengaluru police have arrested two daily wage labourers for allegedly robbing and assaulting a 37-year-old woman in the city. A senior police official denied initial media reports of gangrape, stating that the woman was soliciting prostitution and engaged in consensual acts with the suspects.

According to the investigation, after the sexual encounter, the suspects refused to pay and instead robbed the victim of her mobile phone and Rs 450. The woman subsequently lodged a complaint with the authorities.

Preliminary investigations revealed that the victim, a utensil trader from Tamil Nadu, was familiar with the accused, Ganesh, 27, and Sharavana, 35. The suspects, both transient workers, often spent the night on pavements in the City Market area. The incident occurred around 11.30pm on Sunday while the victim was heading to her brother's house in Yelahanka. The police noted that she approached the two men for money, but they lured her to Godown Street, where the crime took place. Following the complaint, a case of robbery and assault was registered, leading to the quick apprehension of the suspects by Inspector Guruprasad of the SJ Park Police Station. The investigation is ongoing to ascertain the full details of the incident.

—PTI

KINGPIN ELUSIVE

3 arrested for conning techie of ₹12 crore in digital arrest

BENGALURU, 21 JAN

Three men were arrested for cheating a software engineer Rs 11.8 crore through "digital arrest" scam in November last year, a police official said on Tuesday.

The accused, Dhaval Bhai Shah, 34 was arrested from Ahmedabad while Tarun Natani, 24, and Karan Shamdasani, 28, were arrested from Ulasnagar in Maharashtra on 10 January, the official said.

The police seized Rs 3.7 crore from bank accounts of the accused and are searching for their other associates, the official said.

PHOTO: PIXABAY

It is suspected that the kingpin of the gang operates from Dubai, police said, adding that the victim, 39-year-old Vijay Kumar, was kept in "digital arrest" for a month.

The fraud occurred between 25 November and 12 December. Kumar said in his complaint, that on 11 November, a person claiming to be a Telecom Regulatory Authority of India officer called him and said his SIM card was used for illegal actions and case was registered against him in Mumbai's Colaba Cyber Police Station.

Later, another caller, who identified himself as a police officer, told Kumar that his Aadhaar details were misused to open bank accounts for money laundering, the FIR stated. The fraudsters threatened him of "physical arrest" and forced him to transfer Rs 11.8 crore to different bank accounts over a period of time. However, when their demands continued, Kumar approached the police.

—PTI

Man vows to kill troublemakers, tags DGP on X

YADGIR, 21 JAN

Miffed at police for not receiving in file his complaint against a group of people opposing his house construction, a person in Yadgir district recently posted on X a threat to kill the miscreants with a sword unless the cops acted against them.

Complainant Sharif, a resident of Baradevanala village in Yadgiri district has also included a picture of swords and tagged the director general of police (DGP) in his post.

Sharif said some people in his village obstructed his house construction despite having all required permissions. He said his father had been requesting Kodekal police for the past one month to file a complaint against this group.

The police were refusing to file his complaint under pressure from Shorapur MLA Raja Venugopal Naik's personal assistant, Sharif said. Bengaluru police responded to Sharif's post, asking him which police station he approached. "Please ask the Kodekal police station officials to take action. Our father has been visiting the police station for a month, but no one is paying attention. Otherwise I will have to do my law (sic)," he replied.

Yadgiri Superintendent of Police Pruthvik Shankar acknowledged receiving a complaint from Sharif and said the police would give the family protection if the Gram Panchayat requested it in writing. Shankar also said that the photo Sharif tagged the DGP on X was taken from the internet.

—Salar News

Man gets 35 years in jail for raping minor student

KALABURAGI, 21 JAN

A Court in Kalaburagi has sentenced a man to 35 years of imprisonment and a fine of Rs 20,000 for kidnapping and raping a 17-year-old student.

According to police sources, Yallappa Tirumala, 22, a resident of Mudhola in Sedam taluk, used to tormenting the minor student, saying that he was in love with her. In 2023, while the girl was on her way to Sedam bus stand, he abducted the girl, took her to a lodge and raped her. Traumatised, the girl attempted suicide on the next day. After she was hospitalised, she revealed about the rape and a case was registered at Mudhola police station, they said. Inspector Palakshaiah Hiremath investigated the case and filed the charge sheet in the court. Special Public Prosecutor Shantaveera B Thuppa appeared on behalf of the government. Sources said the court has also ordered Rs 5 lakh relief to victim.

—Salar News

SC asks Delhi police to reply on Tahir's bail plea

NEW DELHI, 21 JAN

The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked Delhi police to respond to a plea filed by former councillor and Delhi riots accused Tahir Hussain who sought interim bail to campaign for the upcoming Delhi assembly polls. Senior advocate Siddharth Aggarwal argued nine of the co-accused have already been granted bail, and that contesting elections is a complicated process. He added that Hussain had been in jail for four years and 10 months. The bench, consisting of Justice Pankaj Mithal and Justice Ahsanuddin Amanullah said that the court could grant interim bail "if we are satisfied on the merits." *—PTI*

2nd meeting of JPC on simultaneous polls on 31 Jan

NEW DELHI, 21 JAN

The second meeting of the joint parliamentary committee examining the two bills for simultaneous elections will be held on January 31, according to a schedule posted on the Lok Sabha website. The first meeting of the parliamentary panel on 8 Jan to discuss The Constitution (129th Amendment) Bill and the Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill saw a robust exchange of contesting views. Opposition members criticised the concept as an attack on the basic fabric of the Constitution and federalism, while BJP MPs hailed it as reflective of popular opinion. According to the Lok Sabha website, procedure and modalities for examination of the amendment bills will be discussed at the upcoming meeting, featuring 27 members from the Lok Sabha and 12 from the Rajya Sabha. *—PTI*

Woman's nomination rejected for Erode bypoll

ERODE, 21 JAN

Padmavathy, a woman independent candidate of the Erode east assembly by poll was rejected nomination after two independent candidates noted that her name was in the voters list in Karnataka, hours after the list of candidates was finalised, officials said. Independent candidates Azhwar and Noor Mohammed approached Returning Officer (RO) N Manish with a complaint stating that Padmavathy's name was in the voters list in KR Puram, Karnataka, and therefore could not compete in Tamil Nadu. The time for withdrawal of nominations was at 3.00pm, Monday, but the complain was filed after 5.00pm, and Padmavathy's nomination was rejected only in the intervening night. *—PTI*

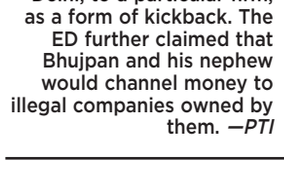

PHOTO: PTI

Laundering case: SC junks ED's bail plea against Bhujbal

NEW DELHI, 21 JAN

The Supreme Court on Tuesday dismissed the plea of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) challenging the bail granted to NCP leader Chhagan Bhujbal in a money laundering case. The bench, consisting of Justice Abhay S Oka and Justice Ujjal Bhuyan said "Impugned orders granting bail were passed back in 2018. Therefore, no case for interference can be made out at this stage under Article 136 of the Constitution." The bench however dismissed Bhujbals plea challenging his arrest. The former Maharashtra deputy chief minister was arrested after an ED inquiry claimed that he awarded construction and development contract, including for the construction of the Maharashtra Sadan in New Delhi, to a particular firm, as a form of kickback. The ED further claimed that Bhujpan and his nephew would channel money to illegal companies owned by them. *—PTI*

Delhi polls: BJP promises free education, insurance

Kejriwal describes manifesto as 'dangerous for the country'

NEW DELHI, 21 JAN

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP Anurag Thakur addresses a press conference ahead of Delhi Assembly Elections, in New Delhi **PHOTO: ANI**

Former Union Minister and senior BJP leader Anurag Thakur on Tuesday unveiled the second part of the BJP's Sankalp Patra (manifesto) for the upcoming Delhi Assembly Elections 2025.

Thakur announced several ambitious schemes, including free education for needy students from kindergarten to postgraduate level in government institutions. The manifesto also promises a financial boost for students preparing for competitive exams, Rs 1000 monthly stipend for SC students in ITIs and polytechnic skill centres and formation of an Auto-Taxi Driver Welfare Board, promising Rs 10 lakh life insurance and Rs 5 lakh accident insurance for drivers.

Similarly, a welfare board for domestic workers is on the cards, with the same insurance benefits, the manifesto said.

The former union minister also announced that if voted to power in the national capital, the BJP will form an SIT to investigate the AAP government's irregularities and scams.

AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday described the BJP's election manifestos as "dangerous for the country" and said it has revealed their "true intentions".

"If the BJP comes to power, they will stop free education, end free health facilities and make it difficult for the poor to survive in Delhi. This is a direct attack on the welfare of the common man," he said.

"These people will also stop other schemes like free electricity, water and free bus travel for women. Don't press the wrong button. Otherwise these people will make living in Delhi difficult," Kejriwal said.

The BJP also accused Kejriwal on Tuesday of misquoting the Ramayan and "insulting" Lord Ram and Sita, with its Delhi unit president Virendra Sachdeva holding a fast as a mark of absolution.

Kejriwal reacted sharply to the charge, alleging that the BJP was protesting against him in the honour of demon king Ravana and accused the party leaders of having "demonic tendencies". *—PTI*

Kerala Assembly passes resolution against UGC rules

T'PURAM, 21 JAN

Pinarayi Vijayan **PHOTO: PTI**

The Kerala assembly on Tuesday unanimously passed a resolution urging the Central government to withdraw the draft UGC guidelines and issue a revised version.

The resolution was moved in the House by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, who said the assembly was of the clear opinion that the draft UGC norms do not reflect the spirit of the Constitution.

CM said universities in states function according to the laws passed by the respective state legislatures, as they have the power to establish and supervise universities.

The Central government only has the power to coordinate and fix standards for higher education and research institutions, he said.

By ignoring these facts and without holding discussions with all stakeholders, the Centre issued the draft guidelines which completely exclude the opinions of the state governments, including on the appointment of vice chancellors. Therefore, they are "incompatible with the federal system and democracy", Vijayan said.

The CM said the norms allow even appointment of persons from the private sector as vice chancellors, while not considering academic experts. This was "a move to commercialise the higher education sector, he said.

Vijayan contended that the draft UGC norms of 2025 can only be seen as part of the moves to destroy democratic values in the field of higher education and to bring it into "the control of those who spread religious and communal ideas". *—PTI*

India, France review ties ahead of Modi's Paris visit in Feb

NEW DELHI, 21 JAN

PHOTO: PTI

- The meeting was co-chaired by Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri and Secretary General of French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs Anne-Marie Descotes

India and France have agreed to expand their partnership in high-end technology sectors, ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's expected visit to Paris next month to attend a summit on artificial intelligence.

The two sides discussed various aspects of the bilateral ties during India–France Foreign Office Consultations held in Paris on Monday.

The meeting was co-chaired by Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri and Secretary General of French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs Anne-Marie Descotes.

In the talks, the two sides also deliberated on the evolving situation in the Middle East and the Russia–Ukraine conflict.

Misri also called on French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot and Emmanuel Bonne, the diplomatic advisor to the French president.

"Both sides undertook a comprehensive review of the progress made in various facets of bilateral cooperation, as outlined in the India-France Horizon 2047 Roadmap," the MEA said on Tuesday.

The Horizon Roadmap was unveiled following wide-ranging talks between Prime Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron in Paris in July 2023. Its aim was to shore up bilateral ties including in trade and investment.

"The discussions encompassed key areas of bilateral cooperation including defence, civil nuclear energy, space, cyber and digital, AI, institutional dialogue mechanisms, and initiatives fostering people-to-people exchanges and cultural ties," the MEA said in a statement.

It said both sides agreed to expand bilateral partnership in the areas of high-end technology sectors. *—PTI*

'LACK OF EVIDENCE'

Cops to close case against NCP's Malik

MUMBAI, 21 JAN

Nawab Malik **PHOTO: PTI**

Mumbai police have informed the Bombay High Court they would file a closure report citing lack of evidence in former NCB zonal director Sameer Wankhede's complaint against senior NCP leader Nawab Malik under the Atrocities Act.

Wankhede had in 2022 lodged a complaint against Malik with the suburban Goregaon police under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act.

Last year, the Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officer moved the court through his counsel, Rajiv Chavan, alleging police inaction on his complaint and sought for the case to be transferred to the CBI.

On 14 January, additional public prosecutor S S Kaushik informed a division bench of Justices Revati Mohite Dere and Neela Gokhale that the police investigated the case and have decided to file a "C-summary report".

Once such a report is filed before the trial court concerned, the complainant in the case can challenge the same, and after hearing all parties, the court can either accept or reject the closure report.

Wankhede had sought for the case to be transferred to the CBI. *—PTI*

TN SPEAKER FLAYS GUV, WALKS OUT OF MEETING

CHENNAI, 21 JAN

Tamil Nadu Assembly Speaker M Appavu walked out of a meeting in Patna on Monday after accusing Governor R N Ravi of continuing to 'disrespect' the people of the state, elected government and century-old TN Legislative Assembly.

Ravi's activities were "deeply worrying." Appavu said. Citing the recommendations of the Punchhi, Sarkaria, Rajamannar and Venkatachaliah Commissions, Appavu argued that the state legislature should be empowered to remove the Governor through a resolution.

However, Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha Harivansh Narayan objected to his comments and said his remarks would not be recorded in the minutes of the meeting of the 85th All India Presiding Officers' Conference. *—PTI*

SOLVE MISUNDERSTANDINGS, FIGHT AGAINST DRUGS: CM BIREN

IMPHAL, 21 JAN

Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh on Tuesday called for unity and discussion among recognized tribes in the state. Speaking at 53rd Statehood Day celebrations, Singh said "Every misunderstanding should be resolved with discussions by sitting together. All recognised tribes need to live together."

Manipur, which became a full-fledged state on 21 January, 1972 has seen at least 250 people killed and thousands rendered homeless since May 2024. Singh asked for a collective effort towards building a prosperous Manipur that upholds the values of harmony, justice and progress.

Speaking on the issue of immigration Singh said, "We (state government) had said was (we need) proper identification of illegal immigrants to send them outside." *—PTI*

'Exam paper leaks snatch youth's rights'

NEW DELHI, 21 JAN

Asserting that exam paper leak is a weapon to take away the rights of youth, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday alleged that such incidents take place every day in BJP-ruled states and vowed to raise the issue of protesting BPSC aspirants in Parliament.

Days after visiting the site of the nearly month-old agitation in Patna against alleged irregularities in the Bihar Public Service Commission (BPSC) exam, Gandhi shared on his YouTube channel a video of his interaction with the protesting students.

In his post, Gandhi said he discussed serious issues when he recently met the students, who suffered due to the "BPSC exam scam" in Bihar and faced the baton of the police.

The students revealed the labyrinth of this paper leak and exam scam, he said.

"Whether the candidates get the question papers or not, they definitely go viral on social media. Candidates are trapped in vicious circles like normalization and scaling so that they cannot even know the guarantee of their employment from their scores," he said.

The students protesting in a Gandhian way were brutally lathi-charged and after that, cases were forcibly filed, Gandhi said. *—PTI*

INDIAN PAVILION INAUGURATION

Healthier women make stronger economies: WEF

DAVOS, 21 JAN

Union Ministers Chirag Paswan, Jayant Chaudhary and others at the inauguration of Indian pavilion at WEF, in Davos, Switzerland **PHOTO: PTI**

Making a strong case for investing in women's health worldwide, the World Economic Forum on Tuesday said its new research shows that closing the women's health gap could unlock USD 400 billion in global GDP annually by 2040.

The Forum also launched here at its annual meeting a new Women's Health Impact Tracking platform, a publicly accessible tool designed to monitor and bridge the health gaps faced by millions of women worldwide.

The new report, Blueprint to Close the Women's Health Gap: How to Improve Lives and Economies for All, was published in collaboration with the McKinsey Health Institute (MHI).

It highlighted that women live 25 per cent more of their lives in poor health compared to men and showed how targeted action around nine key health conditions could reduce the global disease burden by 27M disability-adjusted life years and add the equivalent of 2.5 healthy days per woman per year.

The nine conditions are divided into lifespan conditions, related to a total number of years lived (maternal hypertensive disorders, postpartum haemorrhage, ischemic heart disease, cervical cancer and breast cancer) and health span conditions, related to how many of those years are healthy (endometriosis, menopause, migraine and premenstrual syndrome).

"Measuring progress is essential for driving meaningful change and developing effective healthcare strategies tailored to women," said Shyam Bishen, Head of the Centre for Health and Healthcare and member of the Executive Committee, World Economic Forum.

"Despite the opportunity to add 2.5 additional healthy days to women's lives, they are often overlooked due to a lack of sex-specific research," he added. *—PTI*

Naidu plans 15 meets on Day 2

AMARAVATI, 21 JAN

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu is scheduled to hold up to 15 meetings on the second day of his visit to the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, officials said on Tuesday. Speaking at the launch of an economic taskforce on Swarna Andhra by 2047, he also said that India has got the right leader at the right time in Prime Minister Narendra Modi and he will take the country to the top across various economic and social parameters. "Indians are the most accepted community globally and it will continue in future," he said. *—PTI*

Chirag Paswan **PHOTO: PTI**

Huge potential for processed foods: Paswan

DAVOS, 21 JAN

Union minister Chirag Paswan on Monday said that the Indian processed food sector has huge potential for growth in the international markets. In Davos for the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting, he said, "Our aim is how we can help our farmers more, while also strengthening the food processing industry of the country." In an agriculture-dominated country like India, the food processing industry can play a key role in ensuring the economic progress of our farmers, he said. *—PTI*

TN's growth is India's growth: Rajaa

DAVOS, 21 JAN

Pitching Tamil Nadu as an investment destination aligned with best global practices, the state's industries minister TRB Rajaa said at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in Davos that his government implements its economic and industrial policies after learning from the best minds in the world. He said any investment coming to Tamil Nadu would eventually be an investment into India. *—PTI*

India at top in investment plans by CEOs

DAVOS, 21 JAN

India is among the top countries in terms of investment plans made by CEOs and also in terms of their confidence in the country's economic growth, a global survey showed on Monday. Releasing its annual CEO survey in Davos on the first evening of the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting, PwC said nearly 9 out of 10 Indian CEOs are confident of economic growth as they plan headcount increases and continued AI rollout. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Probe panel revisits Sambhal riot sites

SAMBHAL, 21 JAN

A judicial commission formed by the Uttar Pradesh government visited Sambhal on Tuesday to inspect areas affected by the riots during the survey of the Shahi Jama Masjid on 24 November last year and record statements of witnesses. The Commission, formed on 1 December last year, revisited these locations, including the Shahi Jama Masjid area, where the violence occurred. The delegation was accompanied by District Magistrate Rajender Pensiya, Superintendent of Police Krishna Kumar Vishnoi and Moradabad police range DIG Muniraj G. The team, led by the commission members, conducted an extensive inspection lasting over an hour. Following this, they moved to the PWD guest house on Chandausi Road in Sambhal, where they would record public statements until 4pm on Tuesday. *—PTI*

Pune records 22 'cases' of Guillain Barré syndrome

PUNE, 21 JAN

As many as 22 suspected cases of Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS), an immunological nerve disorder, have been detected in Pune, prompting the civic authorities to conduct a detailed survey of patients, an official said on Tuesday. Pune Municipal Corporation's (PMC) health department has sent samples from the affected patients to ICMR-NIV for testing, the official said. Civic officials have said that most of these cases were detected in the Sinhgad Road area of the city. According to doctors, Guillain-Barré syndrome is a rare condition that causes sudden numbness and muscle weakness, with symptoms like severe weakness in the limbs. Most suspected patients are in the age group of 12 to 30 years, with only one case involving a 59-year-old patient who is currently undergoing treatment. *—PTI*

Actor Vinayakan sorry for outburst in viral video

T'PURAM, 21 JAN

Malayalam and Tamil actor Vinayakan on Tuesday tendered an apology to the public a day after a video purportedly involving him went viral on social media. In that video, Vinayakan is purportedly seen yelling at someone out of frame from a balcony, using objectionable language and even exposing himself. The video also appears to show Vinayakan losing his balance, collapsing onto the balcony floor, and continuing his vocal outburst. In a Facebook post, Vinayakan said he was tendering an apology to the society for all the "negative energies" from his side. He admitted that as a film actor and as an individual, he was unable to handle many issues. However, he did not specify which matter he was referring to. *—PTI*

Infant falls sick on flight, dies at Kochi hospital

KOCHI, 21 JAN

An 11-month-old infant, who developed some uneasiness onboard a Kerala-bound flight from Qatar, died at a hospital in Kochi, police said on Tuesday. Son of a couple hailing from northern district Malappuram, Fesin Ahammed was travelling with his mother. A police officer said the infant developed some uneasiness onboard the flight and he was rushed to a hospital in Angamaly soon after the flight landed at Nedumbassery airport here. Born as a preterm baby, the boy was already struggling with health issues and was being transported to his home state for further treatment, police said. *—PTI*

RG Kar case: HC lets govt appeal against life-term

Mamata flays CBI, says her cops would have ensured death

KOLKATA, 21 JAN

The Calcutta High Court on Tuesday granted permission to the West Bengal government to file an appeal against the Sealdah court order that sentenced Sanjay Roy to life imprisonment until death in the RG Kar hospital doctor's rape and murder case.

Advocate General Kishor Datta moved a division bench presided by Justice Debangsu Basak to file the appeal to seek death penalty for Roy.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday said, "All of us have demanded the death sentence, but the court has given a life term until death...The case was forcibly taken from us. Had it been with the (Kolkata) police, we would have ensured that he was served a death sentence."

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee says a person on life imprisonment can be freed on parole *PHOTO: X*

The Sealdah court had sentenced Roy to life imprisonment till death after he was convicted of raping and murdering the doctor at the state-run RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, rejecting demands for the death penalty saying it was not a "rarest of the rare" crime.

"If someone is so demonic and barbaric, then how can society remain humane? We have passed the Aparajita Bill, but the Centre is sitting on it," she said at a public meeting in Malda.

Banerjee said, "If someone is given life imprisonment, then the person can be freed on parole. I was once a lawyer and fought several cases. The Sealdah court judge said that it was not the rarest of rare cases and could not award capital punishment. If this is not rarest of rare case then what is it?" *—PTI*

DESPERATE MOVE

Police personnel take the suspect arrested for attacking actor Saif Ali Khan for medical examination *PHOTO: PTI*

Attacker stabbed Saif to free self from grip: Cops

MUMBAI, 21 JAN

- Mumbai police on Tuesday recreated the crime scene at Khan's residence along with Shariful Islam Shehzad Mohammad Rohilla Amin Fakir, the accused in the case

The Bangladeshi national arrested for the knife attack on Saif Ali Khan has told the police that he stabbed the actor in his back multiple times to free himself from his tight grip, an official said on Tuesday.

After the attack, the intruder escaped from Khan's flat, located in upscale Bandra here, and hid in the garden of the building for around two hours, he said.

Police on Sunday arrested the accused, Shariful Islam Shehzad Mohammad Rohilla Amin Fakir, 30, alias Vijay Das, from neighbouring Thane city for stabbing the 54-year-old Bollywood star in the early hours of 16 January.

"The accused entered the actor's flat in the Satguru Sharan building from the bathroom window with the intention of theft. After he entered the house, the actor's staff spotted him and started arguing with him. Soon, Saif Ali Khan came there and sensing a threat, he held the accused tightly from the front. As the accused did not get time to move, he started stabbing the actor in his back to free himself from the latter's grip. As Khan was injured in the attack, the accused managed to break free from his grip," the police official said.

Meanwhile, Mumbai police on Tuesday recreated the crime scene along with Khan's residence along with Shariful Islam Shehzad Mohammad Rohilla Amin Fakir, the accused, an official said.

Fakir entered the country illegally seven months ago and stayed for a few weeks in West Bengal before moving to Mumbai. He also used a West Bengal resident's Aadhaar card to procure a SIM, police said on Tuesday. *—PTI*

Commuters fume as R-Day trials choke Central Delhi

NEW DELHI, 21 JAN

Vehicular movement was severely hit in Central Delhi on Tuesday because of the Republic Day parade rehearsals, leaving hundreds of commuters stranded on the road.

Routes leading to Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg near the ITO, arterial roads of the Ring Road, the stretch between Ashram and IP Estate flyover, Man Singh Road, Rafi Marg, Janpath Road, Shahjahan Road, Akbar Road, Ashoka Road and many other routes around the Kartavya Path were severely hit.

Posting a picture of the heavy traffic near Kartavya Path, a user on X said, "Is it too much to ask @dtptraffic to manage traffic? The entire Central Delhi is choked."

Some users reported that they were late for work or did not want to go to work due to Delhi roads being jam-packed.

Motorists blamed traffic personnel for not regulating traffic properly and said that there was no proper information about the traffic diversions. A user who shared a picture of online maps said, "All the roads leading to Central Delhi are fully jammed. People had to wait more than one hour on the road to reach their destination." Rajat Kumar, a private employee, said, "I got stuck in traffic for more than two hours. I had to inform my seniors that I would be late for work."

Daredevil team of Corps of Signals of the Indian Army rehearse for the Republic Day Parade Tuesday *PHOTO: PTI*

The snarls persisted despite the traffic police issuing an advisory on January 15, notifying road closures in central Delhi o n January 17, 18, 20, and 21. *—PTI*

COPS CALL OFF SEARCH IN J&K'S SOPORE

SRINAGAR, 21 JAN

The operation in Jammu and Kashmir's Sopore area that claimed the life of an army soldier was called off on Tuesday after terrorists fled the area, officials said.

Sepoy Pangala Kartheek was injured in the exchange of fire with terrorists in a hideout at Zaloora Gujjarpati in the Sopore police district and died as he was being evacuated from the scene on Monday.

"The (Sopore) operation, launched on specific intelligence inputs, involved the busting of a militant hideout... The operation is over," Inspector General of Police (Kashmir Zone) VK Birdi said on Tuesday.

Security forces resumed the searches at Zaloora Gujjarpati on Tuesday morning but called it off later in the day, Sopore police posted on X. *—PTI*

INHUMAN ACT

Court orders FIR after 4 assault pregnant woman

VARANASI, 21 JAN

A court here on Monday directed police to register an FIR against four individuals for allegedly assaulting a pregnant woman, leading to her miscarriage, over the suspicion of witchcraft.

Special chief judicial magistrate Ashwani Kumar issued the order to the station house officer of Bhelupur police station after hearing a plea of the victim, Poonam Kumari, of Ranipur in Bhelupur.

Poonam filed the plea under Section 175(3) (power to order an investigation) of the BNS through advocate Vikas Singh.

The incident took place at around 10.30pm on 2 September, 2024, when the woman heard abuses being hurled her and noise of vandalism outside her home. When she stepped out, she saw Gautam Bind, his brothers Saroj, Hari and Raja damaging her husband's e-rickshaw.

When she protested, the group hurled abuses at her and her mother-in-law, and accused them of practising witchcraft and casting spells on their family. Gautam then climbed onto the roof and threw a brick at her, hitting her stomach, Poonam alleged.

When the neighbours arrived hearing the commotion, the accused fled the scene.

The attack left Poonam unconscious, said the complaint. She was rushed to a hospital, but she suffered miscarriage of her two-month pregnancy.

Poonam alleged that despite filing a complaint with the police, no action was taken, prompting her to approach the court. *—PTI*

I-T DEPT RAIDS PLACES LINKED TO DIL RAJU

HYDERABAD, 21 JAN

The Income Tax Department on Tuesday conducted searches at multiple locations linked to prominent film producer Dil Raju and a few others in Hyderabad, sources said. The searches are carried out with regard to the charges of tax evasion, they said.

The locations linked to some other film producers are also being searched, the sources said.

Multiple premises are being covered in this search activity in the city including those in Jubilee Hills and Banjara Hills, they said.

Dil Raju, whose real name is Venkata Ramana Reddy, is a leading film producer and the chairman of Telangana Film Development Corporation (FDC). He produced some of the biggest Telugu blockbusters, including the recent Ram Charan-starrer 'Game Changer'. *—PTI*

CM Abdullah visits village hit by mysterious deaths in J&K

BADHAAL, 21 JAN

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday visited the Badhaal village in Rajouri district to express solidarity with the bereaved families whose 17 members, including 13 children, died under mysterious circumstances in the past one-and-a-half month.

Accompanied by Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana and National Conference MLA Javaid Iqbal Choudhary, Abdullah assured all possible help to the victim families and said "we stand with you in this difficult phase".

Soon after reaching the mountainous village, about 55 km from Rajouri district headquarters, Abdullah visited the graveyards and offered 'Fateh' (special prayers) to the deceased.

The chief minister expressed sympathies with the bereaved families including Mohd Aslam who lost his six children and his maternal uncle and aunt, who were issueless and had adopted him, in the past week.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah visits Badhaal village in Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday *PHOTO: ANI*

Among the 17 dead, 13 were children in the age group of three to 15 years.

The visit of the chief minister comes on a day when a high level inter-ministerial team is visiting the village as part of its probe to ascertain the cause of the deaths.

Abdullah said the government has tried its best to find out what is happening in the village, whether the deaths are not the result of any mysterious disease. The chief minister said he had come to express his sympathies with the bereaved families. *—PTI*

SIGNS OF ACCEPTANCE

Pilgrims throng transgenders' Kinnar Akhara at Maha Kumbh

MAHAKUMBH NAGAR, 21 JAN

They faced stiff resistance when they tried to register an akhara for transgender persons 10 years ago, but the tent of their sect at the ongoing Maha Kumbh is now flooded with pilgrims queuing up for blessings.

More than 3,000 transgender persons, most of them abandoned by their families, are residing in the akhara and taking part in the sacred bathing ritual at the Sangam.

The surge of devotees seeking their blessings has finally offered them hope that they would be accepted in society.

Mahamandleshawar of Kinnar Akhara, Pavitra Nandan Giri – who identified herself as a woman – SAID society had always despised eunuchs.

Businessman Gautam Adani and family visit Maha Kumbh on Tuesday; Star sprinter Hima Das visited the Maha Kumbh and took a dip in the holy waters of Ganga, on Tuesday *PHOTOS: PTI*

"We have always been considered inferior. When we wanted to register an akhara for ourselves, questions were raised about our religion. We were asked why we needed it. Despite the resistance, we managed to register it 10 years ago and this is our first Maha Kumbh," she said.

Akharas are monastic institutions or sects that unite seers (ascetics) under specific spiritual traditions and practices.

Giri said, "Today, we are able to take a dip at the Sangam, conduct processions similar to other akharas and perform rituals. The akhara is flooded with pilgrims, and they are lining up to take our blessings. We are proud to have found our place and hopefully, we will be accepted more in society."

A nursing graduate, Giri said her family abandoned her, as is the case with many transgender persons, and she found herself in the community and her new family.

The Akhil Bharatiya Kinnar Akhara is the 14th akhara at the Kumbh. *—PTI*

INDIA'S FIRST FLYING TAXI

For the first time ever, the flying taxi 'Shunya' by Sarla Aviations was unveiled at New Delhi's Auto Expo 2025. This revolutionary urban air mobility vehicle is designed to offer fast, eco-friendly transportation, featuring cutting-edge electric vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL) technology. Reports suggest that 'Shunya' could be available in the commercial market by 2028, with plans for extensive trials and regulatory approvals in the coming years

PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

Climate experts fume as US pulls out of Paris pact

The US decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement will weaken global efforts to mitigate climate change, and the worst consequences will be felt in developing countries that have contributed the least to global emissions, experts said on Tuesday.

US President Donald Trump, on his first day in office of his second term, signed an executive order withdrawing the United States, the world's largest historical emitter of greenhouse gases, from the Paris Agreement for the second time in a decade.

This places the US alongside Iran, Libya, and Yemen as the only countries not part of the 2015 global climate accord, which aims to limit global warming since the industrial revolution to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

RR Rashmi, Distinguished Fellow at The Energy and Resources Institute, said the impact of the new US administration is likely to be seen more in global financing for clean energy transition.

"The forces of competitive trade actions in the name of climate may get reinforced," he said.

Harjeet Singh, climate activist and Founding Director of Satat Sampada Climate Foundation, described the move as a devastating blow to global climate efforts.

The US is prioritising short-term economic gains for fossil fuel industries over the health and well-being of American communities, especially those already burdened by increasingly frequent and severe climate disasters such as wildfires and storms.

"Globally, it undermines the collective fight against climate change at a time when unity and urgency are more critical than ever. The most tragic consequences, however, will be felt in developing countries which have contributed the least to global emissions," Singh said.

Trishant Dev, a programme officer at the Delhi-based Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), said the US, as a major fossil fuel producer, has done little to fulfil its share in combating climate change.

"With Trump's return and his stance to entirely sidestep that responsibility, it is decisively clear that the world is left to carry that weight," he said.

Dev said Trump has already promised to freeze climate finance and temporarily suspended all US foreign assistance programmes, which could have a big impact not just on climate finance, but on development finance as a whole.

"Under the new regime, institutions like the International Development Finance Corporation will face a test in how they handle their role in supporting important programmes, particularly in countries like India. The big question is whether they will maintain their commitment to development in the global South or change course altogether," he said.

President Donald Trump throws pens used to sign executive orders to the crowd during an indoor Presidential Inauguration parade event in Washington ***PHOTO: PTI***

CSE's Director General Sunita Narain had earlier told PTI that the US has historically underperformed in global climate efforts, particularly in financing support for vulnerable countries, decarbonization, and financial commitments to the developing world.

She said that Trump's presidency "would make matters even worse".

Laurence Tubiana, CEO of the European Climate Foundation and a key architect of the Paris Agreement, said multilateral climate action remains robust despite such setbacks.

The climate crisis cannot be tackled by any country alone -- it demands a multilateral response.

But this moment should serve as a wake-up call to reform the system, ensuring that those most affected -- communities and individuals on the frontlines -- are at the centre of our collective governance, she said.

At the UN climate conference in Azerbaijan, the US stepping back under Trump was one of the major factors behind a weak climate finance deal.

Trump initially announced the US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement in 2017 during his first term, a move reversed by the Joe Biden administration in early 2021.

In the run-up to the 2024 US elections, Trump repeatedly referred to climate change as a "hoax" and reiterated his intention to pull the US out of the Paris Agreement.

On Monday, on his first day in office of his second term, Trump signed an executive order withdrawing the US from the Paris Agreement again. He called the Paris climate accord a one-sided agreement, stating that the US would not "sabotage its own industries while China pollutes with impunity".

The executive order directed the US Ambassador to the UN to immediately submit formal written notification of the withdrawal from the Paris Agreement. *—PTI*

LETTERS

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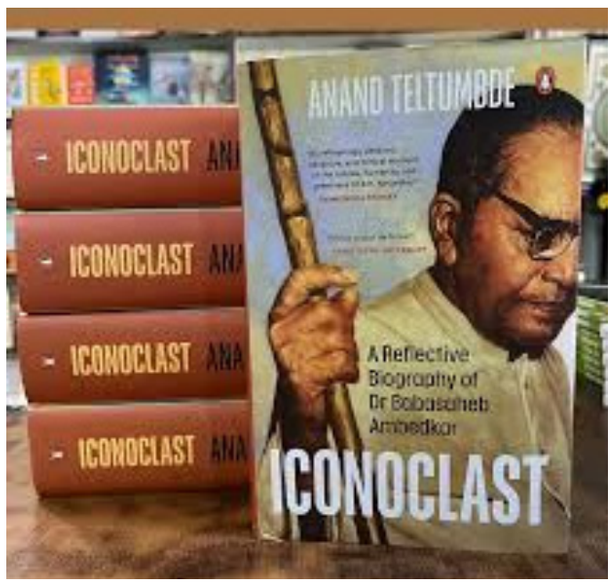
SALAR سالار

'Iconoclast' unravels Ambedkar's complexities

TN Gopalan



Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi writes in his autobiography, "I do not want to be called Mahatma. I am a humble servant of the people. I have no desire to be elevated to a position of greatness. I am just a man who is trying to serve humanity."

But the honorific, apparently conferred by Rabindranath Tagore in 1915, remained in popular use all through the rest of his life, and he never really issued any fatwa against it, as it were.

Anand Teltumbde doesn't tell us whether Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar ever discouraged his followers from hailing him as Babasaheb, but he stresses, "Ambedkar did not want devotees, he wanted followers. And he explicitly stated how the followers ought to behave:

'There is no ingratitude in the disciple not accepting the maxims or the conclusions of his master. For even when he rejects them, he is bound to acknowledge to his master in deep reverence. 'You awakened me to be myself; for that I thank you.'

As with Gandhi, Ambedkar, who became an icon to millions of his followers during his lifetime, could do little to staunch the flow of encomiums.

There is a touching tribute from noted Tamil poet Bharati to Gandhi – You're indeed a Mahatma who appeared on this earth to redeem a people debased and trapped in poverty…

Actually, the homage would be equally or even more befitting Ambedkar himself in as much the segment he dedicated his life to was in a far more pitiable plight than the general lot of Indians and it did call for almost superhuman efforts to make the panchamars seem human in the eyes of the rulers. He did rise to the occasion and more, but unfortunately the job left unfinished has only been channelled along quite undesirable channels by those who speak in his name.

Teltumbde has taken upon himself the unenviable task of 'demolishing' the icon, with a view to awakening the Dalits at large to be themselves as the master had wanted and fight for their long-denied rights without any blinkers, without being misled by self-serving bhakts.

Easily the most appalling of the late leader's views was his crass anti-feminism. Even though he encouraged women to join his agitations or the outfits he floated, he didn't really like them to be independent.

Attacking the Congress for inducting a large contingent of women to the parliament, Ambedkar fumed, "When these women return home with files under their arm, after spending the entire day in the Lok Sabha, are their husbands to serve them food on the table? Should these women go to the Parliament and Assemblies and, on returning in the evenings, ask their husbands, 'Dear, I've returned from Parliament. Has all the house-work been done or not?' These women are to go to parliament and who is supposed to look after their children? One child is crying, the second has a snotty nose, and the third has gone off somewhere. Then who is going to manage such children? Everything is being turned upside down…"

Not only did he go on to cast aspersions on the character of the women parliamentarians, he had, on another occasion, lashed out at Mahar sex-workers and charged them with bringing a bad name to the entire community.

At a convention in Mumbai in 1936 to exhort Dalits to ditch Hinduism as the only available option to overcome the disabilities they were facing at every turn, Ambedkar admitted the conference was confined to the Mahar sect, but justified it saying it was so designed to gauge the magnitude of support for conversion among them, and went on to declare that 'each caste should independently decide on what is best for their emancipation.'

Such was the model promoted by him, his own appeal was limited to the Mahars "and equivalent castes in other regions (generally most populous caste among Untouchables), which identified him as their caste hero."

Teltumbde dwells at length on Ambedkar's strident opposition to communism, but glosses over the possibility that he was perhaps put off by the Stalinist perversions of the times. Possible too he was aghast over the steady erosion of his ranks as the appeal of Marxism caught the imagination of many oppressed, as the author astutely points out.

The book also makes a scathing criticism of many leading Ambedkarites, some of them happily becoming agents of the Hindutva bigots.

In an earlier work, 'Dalits Past, present and future', he exposes the opportunism of many leaders but two things bear mention here. One, the multifarious splits in the Republican Party of India largely correspond to the Mahar subsect divisions, secondly Savita Ambedkar, the Babasaheb's second wife and who nursed him towards his last days, was hounded out of public life essentially because she was a Brahmin.

This is a piece of some extraordinary iconoclasm and much called for too. Anand Teltumbde could well afford to take such a risk without being pilloried by self-proclaimed devotees – not only is he a respected Ambedkar scholar but he has also married a granddaughter of the late leader, Rama.

Those who have made Ambedkar worship their full-time vocation can only wince in silence. So far none has dared question his motives. We need many more crusaders like Anand Teltumbde everywhere.

Karl Marx once declared he was not a Marxist himself, irritated as he was by the squabbles among his followers. If only there had been a soul-searching in the communist movement at any point of time, perhaps Orwell would not have had to write Animal Farm or 1984. When totalitarian horrors are categorically disowned by mainstream Marxist parties, they are less likely to become the bogeymen they are made out to be by vested interests.

TN Gopalan is a senior journalist based in Chennai. Views expressed are the author's own.

Indian reporters face risk of violence, murder as press freedom slides

Freelance journalist Mukesh Chandrakar was killed on 1 January , with his body discovered two days later at a road construction site Chhattisgarh.

The journalist ran a popular YouTube channel named Bastar Junction, and was killed just days after reporting on corruption involving local contractors in the road-building business. The postmortem report showed severe injuries to his head, chest, back and stomach.

Police suspect that the murder was motivated by Chandrakar's journalistic work. At least four people have been arrested, and some local officials have been suspended following the crime. But the death of the young reporter also inflamed the nationwide debate on press freedom and the safety of local journalists in India.

'Without any sense of security'

Bastar is a region struggling with a Maoist insurgency, and journalists face threats from multiple sides: India's security forces, insurgent groups, and corrupt individuals or powerful figures who profit from the ongoing conflict.

Raunak Shivhare, an independent journalist and a close friend of Chandrakar's, told DW that the journalist's death only drew nationwide attention because of its brutal nature.

"Journalists in Bastar have been facing these issues continuously," he said. "We have been operating here without any sense of security."

India sliding on press freedom

In the past 15 years, India has seen a massive drop in its ranking in the global Press Freedom Index maintained by the media watchdog Reporters Without Borders (RSF), from 105 in 2009 to 159 in 2024.

India is currently ranked below its neighbour and rival Pakistan.

"We are witnessing an authoritarian drift, with a clear intention to muzzle independent media and silence critical voices," said Celia Mercier, the head of RSF's South Asia Desk, describing the scale of repression as "chilling."

This was vividly illustrated by journalists who lost their lives, including Chandrakar in January 2025, but also Gauri Lankesh in 2017 and Shashikant Warishe in 2023.

Lankesh was a prominent journalist in IT hub, Bengaluru, who ran a publication that often criticised Right-wing extremism. She was shot in front of her house in 2017. Warishe was mowed down on a highway in the Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra state in 2023 by an SUV driven by a land broker he had written about.

In both of those cases, the killers have not been punished.

Mukesh Chandrakar ran a popular YouTube channel named Bastar Junction. Gauri Lankesh was a prominent journalist in Bengaluru, who ran a publication that often criticised Right-wing extremism ***PHOTOS: PTI***

Modi's government rejects criticism

In the past, the government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi government had dismissed the methodology to evaluate press freedom.

Last year, India's information and broadcasting minister, Ashwini Vaishnaw, said attempts to appraise press freedom were "using very low sample size and with little or no understanding of our country and its vibrant democracy."

Addressing lawmakers in July, he said the government was committed to ensuring the freedom of speech, and praised India's press as "robust and flourishing."

Meanwhile, journalists working outside large cities complain of being unprotected when covering topics that local strongmen would prefer to keep away from scrutiny.

RSF's Mercier said journalists face reprisals in the "form of direct attacks, tax investigations, legal proceedings or the threat of detention under anti-terrorist legislation."

"Anti-terrorism laws are abused to imprison journalists, such as the UAPA [Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act] law, especially in Kashmir," she said.

She also highlighted the prevalence of cyberharassment campaigns targeting journalists on social media, aimed at discrediting them as "traitors" or "anti-nationals" to delegitimize their work.

"When Gauri Lankesh was shot dead in broad daylight a few years ago, there were celebrations on twitter by handles that were being followed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi," she said. "This just shows how vulnerable journalists are in this country."

Laws in limbo

Ruben Banerjee, the general secretary of the Editors Guild of India, said the increasing intolerance in the country directly correlates with its deteriorating press freedom.

"Laws have been weaponized and deployed to silence and punish anyone who differs with the official line," says the veteran editor.

Chhattisgarh, the state where Chandrakar was murdered, tried to introduce a law protecting journalists, but the move has stalled due to the lack of political will. On the national level, the Indian government's implementation of its Whistleblower Protection Act has been plagued by significant delays.

Additionally, in India's overburdened court system, it takes years for a verdict, with the accused often securing bail in light of prolonged legal delays. Even eight years after the widely publicized murder of Gauri Lankesh, 17 of the 18 accused are out on bail and one remains at large.

Advertisement 'Ultimate form of censorship'

"Mukesh's death is the penultimate step before the last nail in the coffin. We are now terrified. We live with our families in Bastar. We don't have any protection," says his friend and fellow journalist Shivhare. "Under such circumstances, it is immensely difficult to continue the reporting of sensitive issues."

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) says the majority of 60 Indian reporters who lost their lives since 1992 were local reporters in small towns.

"Without swift prosecution, these attacks send a message that such killings are being tolerated," said CPJ's head of Asia, Beh Lih Yi.

"Killing a journalist is the ultimate form of censorship," she said. *—DW News*

PHOTO: PTI

Pepper spray injures several at JPEGMafia concert

BERLIN, 21 JAN

A concert by American rapper JPEGMafia in Berlin was disrupted on Monday evening after several people were injured by pepper spray. Six people were taken to hospital with respiratory problems, prompting the rapper to cut the event short. The cause of the incident is still unknown, but police are investigating. The concert was being held at the "Huxleys Neue Welt" venue and approximately 1,600 attendees were initially evacuated to a nearby parking lot before being allowed to return home. German broadcaster RBB reported that an unidentified individual sprayed the pepper spray inside the auditorium during the event. The authorities have started an investigation to determine the circumstances surrounding the incident. *—PTI*

Taliban release 2 Americans in prisoner exchange

ISLAMABAD, 21 JAN

A prisoner swap between the United States and Afghanistan's Taliban freed two Americans in exchange for a Taliban figure imprisoned for life in California on drug trafficking charges, officials said. The deal came as President Joe Biden, who oversaw the chaotic US withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021, handed power over to returning President Donald Trump. The family of Ryan Corbett, one American held by the Taliban, confirmed he had been released in a statement. Corbett, who had lived in Afghanistan with his family at the time of the 2021 collapse, was abducted by the Taliban in August 2022 while on a business trip. "Our hearts are filled with overwhelming gratitude," the family's statement said. *—PTI*

16 killed in Java floods and landslides

JAKARTA, 21 JAN

Indonesian rescue teams have recovered at least 16 bodies following devastating flash floods and landslides that struck hilly villages on the main island of Java. Officials reported that nine individuals remain unaccounted for. The disaster was triggered by torrential rains on Monday, which caused rivers to overflow and inundate nine villages in Pekalongan regency, Central Java province. Bergas Catursasi, head of the local Disaster Management Agency, confirmed that rescue workers found the majority of the bodies in the severely affected village of Petungkriyono. Additionally, ten injured survivors were treated at nearby hospitals. *—PTI*

6.4 magnitude quake injures 27 in southern Taiwan

TAIPEI, 21 JAN

A 6.4-magnitude earthquake struck southern Taiwan on Tuesday, resulting in 27 minor injuries and some damage. The quake occurred at 12.17am, centred 38km southeast of Chiayi County Hall, at a depth of 10km. While Taiwan's Central Weather Administration reported the quake's strength, the US Geological Survey recorded it at a slightly lower magnitude of 6. There were reports of minor to moderate damage in Chiayi and Tainan, prompting rescue operations. Among those injured were six individuals, including a one-month-old baby, rescued from a collapsed house in Tainan's Nanxi district. The fire department confirmed that no fatalities occurred, with rescues also taking place in trapped elevators. A fire at a Chiayi printing factory was extinguished without injury. *—PTI*

TRUMP PARDONS 1,500 CAPITOL RIOTERS

Canada prepares for retaliation as US President reiterates imposition of 25 per cent tariff

WASHINGTON/TORONTO, 21 JAN

On his first day back in office, President Donald Trump wielded his clemency powers to pardon over 1,500 individuals charged in connection with the Capitol riot on 6 January 2021. This expansive move encompasses those convicted of violent assaults on police officers and leaders of far-right extremist groups involved in efforts to overturn the 2020 election results. The pardons align with Trump's assertion that the rioters were "patriots" and represent a significant challenge to the Justice Department's attempts to ensure accountability for an attack that injured over 100 police officers.

Supporters celebrated the pardons outside a Washington jail, expressing gratitude to Trump for his actions. Legal representatives for some offenders anticipate that their clients, including those facing lengthy sentences for seditious conspiracy, will be released swiftly. Conversely, critics, including former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer, denounced the pardons as a serious affront to justice.

Meanwhile, Trump has threatened to impose a 25 per cent tariff on imports from Canada and Mexico beginning on 1 February. In a statement from the Oval Office, he reiterated his commitment to the tariffs despite the economic implications. Canadian leaders are preparing for possible retaliation, with Foreign Minister Mélanie Joly stating that Canada would work on preventing tariffs while also planning a response.

Canadian Finance Minister Dominic LeBlanc noted the unpredictability of Trump's actions and underscored the potential negative impacts on living costs, jobs, and supply chain security in the US, stating, "It would be a mistake for the American government to proceed with imposing tariffs."

Trump's order to pardon over 1,500 individuals charged for crimes stemming from the 6 January Capitol riot has ignited anger and disbelief among Democrats and victims of the attacks. Critics assert that the pardons send a dangerous message, undermining the accountability and justice for the violence that occurred that day.

Trump's actions, described by critics as a massive dismantling of the Justice Department's efforts to seek justice, include the full pardon and commutation of sentences for those involved in violent assaults against law enforcement. This includes convicted members of extremist groups who had plotted to keep Trump in power despite his electoral defeat to President Joe Biden. *—PTI*

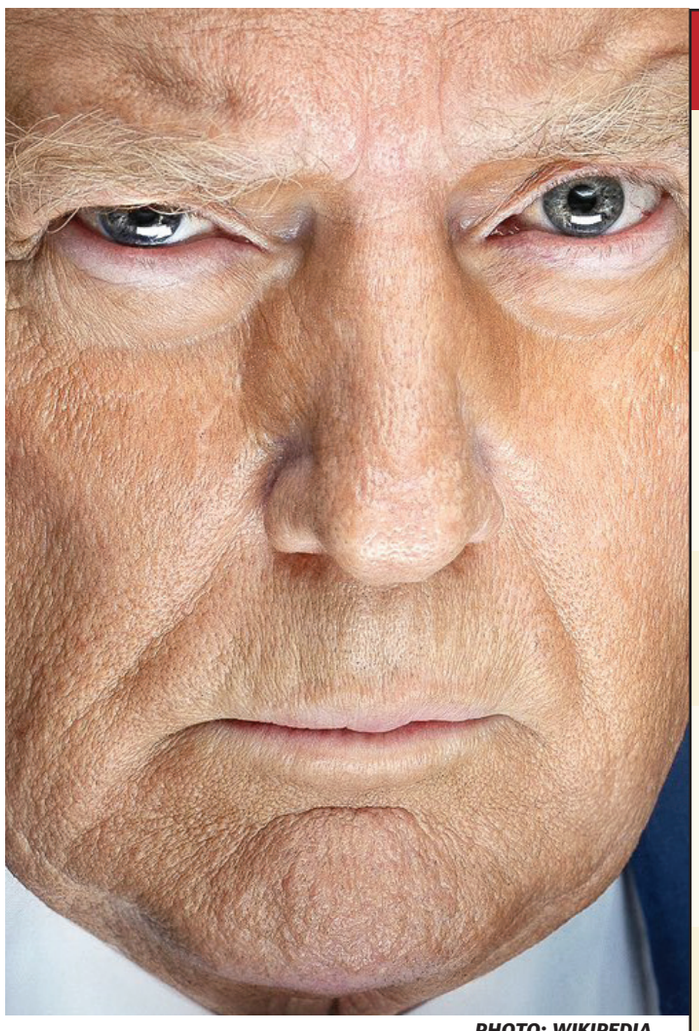


PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

DON'S DAY ONE

TRUMP ORDERS US WITHDRAWAL FROM WHO

US President Donald Trump withdrew America from World Health Organisation (WHO). This is the second attempt to exit the body, following a previous notification in July 2020 over the WHO's handling of Covid-19 pandemic. He cited payment disparities, claiming the US contributes more than China, and accused the WHO of failing reforms and being influenced by member states, risking significant funding loss.

US WITHDRAWS FROM PARIS AGREEMENT

Trump signed an executive order to withdraw the US from the Paris climate agreement, reviving his 2017 decision that had distanced the US from international climate efforts. He denounced the accord as misaligned with American values and detrimental to taxpayer interests.

TIKTOK GETS 75 DAYS

Trump extended TikTok's operations by 75 days, a period in which he says he will seek a US buyer in a deal that can protect national security interests while leaving the popular social media platform open to Americans.

EX-INTELLIGENCE OFFICIALS TO LOSE SECURITY CLEARANCE

Trump plans to suspend the security clearances of 50 former intelligence officials who signed a 2020 letter suggesting the Hunter Biden laptop affair resembled a "Russian information operation". Notable figures targeted include former CIA chief John Brennan and ex-national security adviser John Bolton.

DRUG CARTELS NOW FOREIGN TERRORIST ORGANISATIONS

Trump signed an executive order to classify Mexican drug cartels and other Latin American criminal groups as foreign terrorist organisations. This move, aimed at combating cartel violence and the flow of drugs into the US, may complicate access for migrants from affected countries. Experts warn it could allow military action against cartels and significantly impact migrant asylum claims.

TRUMP HALTS OFFSHORE WIND PROJECT APPROVALS

Trump temporarily suspended offshore wind lease sales in federal waters and paused the approval to both onshore and offshore wind projects. The order mandates a review of wind leasing practices as Trump aims to prioritise fossil fuel production, advocating for lower energy costs.

TRUMP REVIVES DEATH PENALTY PUSH

Trump has signed a far-reaching executive order on the death penalty, instructing the attorney general to secure sufficient lethal injection drugs for states to carry out executions. The order also directs the Justice Department to pursue capital punishment in federal cases and help preserve it in states struggling to obtain lethal injection drugs.

TRUMP SUSPENDS FOREIGN AID PROGRAMMES

Trump suspended all US foreign assistance programmes for 90 days, pending reviews to ensure alignment with his administration's policy goals. The order criticises the foreign aid bureaucracy for being misaligned with American interests and values. Key long-term recipients like Israel are expected to remain largely unaffected.

Vivek Ramaswamy leaves DOGE, considers Ohio Governor run

WASHINGTON, 21 JAN

Indian American entrepreneur-turned-politician Vivek Ramaswamy announced on Monday that he is resigning from the newly established Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) as he prepares to run for Governor of Ohio.

In a post on X, Ramaswamy, 39, expressed pride in supporting DOGE's creation, stating, "I'm confident that Elon & team will succeed in streamlining the government." The initiative was introduced by President Donald Trump following his unexpected win in the November 2024 presidential election, with Tesla owner Elon Musk and Ramaswamy tasked with leading the agency.

Just hours after Trump's inauguration as the 47th President of the United States, Ramaswamy hinted at further announcements regarding his plans for Ohio, emphasising his commitment to helping Trump "make America great again."

Vivek Ramaswamy PHOTO: PTI

The White House acknowledged Ramaswamy's contributions to DOGE, with spokesperson Anna Kelly noting his critical role in its establishment while highlighting the necessity for him to step back from DOGE to pursue an elected office.

Ramaswamy has yet to confirm the date of his official gubernatorial announcement, anticipated for the 2026 election. If successful, he would become the first Indian American Governor of Ohio, joining fellow Indian Americans Bobby Jindal and Nikki Haley, who have previously held gubernatorial positions in Louisiana and South Carolina, respectively. *—PTI*

PANAMA BRISTLES AT TRUMP'S CANAL COMMENTS

PANAMA CITY, 21 JAN

Comments made by US President Donald Trump regarding regaining control of the Panama Canal have raised alarm and nationalist sentiments in Panama. Trump claimed American shippers are being "severely overcharged" and expressed concerns about China's influence over the canal.

Panamanian President José Raúl Mulino firmly rebutted Trump's statements, asserting that the canal is sovereign territory of Panama.

Community concerns are palpable about potential military intervention, as Trump hinted he might consider forceful measures to assert control. Local leaders hope to seek international support to counter US intentions. *—PTI*

Palestinian leadership optimistic; ready to govern Gaza, West Bank

UNITED NATIONS, 21 JAN

The Palestinian government has expressed its readiness to assume the responsibility of governing the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, announcing its commitment to manage crossing points in collaboration with the European Union and Egypt. During a UN Security Council ministerial meeting on Gaza, Palestinian Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Varsen Aghabekian welcomed help in training and equipping Palestinian police and security forces, while also calling for urgent humanitarian aid.

Aghabekian expressed optimism that the ongoing six-week ceasefire could pave the way for a final ceasefire and establish a political process aimed at ending Israel's occupation within a year, as advocated by the International Court of Justice. In contrast, Israel's political coordinator, Reut Shapir Ben Naftaly, stated that the conflict would not conclude until every hostage is returned and Hamas' capacity to launch attacks is dismantled.

- Palestinian Minister Varsen Aghabekian welcomed help in training and equipping Palestinian police and security forces, while also calling for urgent humanitarian aid

Highlighting a pivotal moment in the region, Ben Naftaly noted that Iran's proxies, Hamas and Hezbollah, have suffered significant losses, along with their terror networks, including the Houthis. She added that Israel has no intention of engaging in conflict with Syria but will not tolerate threats to its civilians or Iran's re-establishment in the region, which could facilitate weapons transfers to Hezbollah. *—PTI*

Palestinian MoS for Foreign Affairs Varsen Aghabekian

WEF begins with Beckham award, Antarctica concert

DAVOS, 21 JAN

The World Economic Forum (WEF) has begun its annual meeting in Davos, Switzerland, with a call for "collaboration for the intelligent age". The five-day event, attended by nearly 3,000 leaders from around the world, aims to strengthen collaboration in the face of significant global challenges and opportunities. WEF President and CEO Borge Brense highlighted the uncertain moment in which the meeting is taking place, with new geoeconomic, geopolitical, and technological forces reshaping societies.

The event saw the conferment of the Crystal Awards to legendary footballer David Beckham and two others, as well as an opening concert that highlighted an urgent environmental crisis facing Antarctica. Indian leaders Ashwini Vaishnaw, Devendra Fadnavis and Chandrababu Naidu also attended the meeting. The Crystal Awards celebrate cultural leaders who have made significant contributions to advancing social, environmental, and creative progress worldwide. *—PTI*

Beckham speaks at the WEF meet as fashion designer, philanthropist and author Diane von Furstenberg looks on PHOTO: PTI

WEE-HOUR BLAZE

66 dead, 51 injured in Turkish hotel fire

ANKARA 21 JAN

A fire at a hotel at a popular ski resort in northwestern Turkey on Tuesday killed at least 66 people, Turkey's Interior Minister said. Ali Yerlikaya said at least 51 people were injured.

Health Minister Kemal Memisoglu said at least one of the injured was in serious condition.

The fire broke out at around 3.30 am in the restaurant of the 12-story Grand Kartal hotel in the resort of Kartalkaya in Bolu province, officials and reports said. The cause of the fire was under investigation.

Two of the victims died after jumping from the building in a panic, Gov Abdulaziz Aydin told the state-run Anadolu Agency. Private NTV television said some people tried to climb down from their rooms using sheets and blankets.

There were 234 guests staying at the hotel, Aydin said.

Necmi Kepcetutan, a ski instructor at the hotel, said he was asleep when the fire erupted and he rushed out of the building.

He said the hotel was engulfed in smoke, making it difficult for guests to locate the fire escape.

Television showed the roof and top floors of the hotel on fire. Witnesses and reports said the hotel's fire detection system failed to operate. It took about an hour for the firefighting teams to arrive. The 161-room hotel is on the side of a cliff, hampering efforts to combat the flames, the station also reported.

NTV showed a smoke-blackened lobby, its glass entrance and windows smashed, its wooden reception desk charred and a chandelier crashed to the ground.

Kartalkaya is a popular ski resort in the Koroglu mountains, some 300 km east of Istanbul. The fire occurred during the school semester break when hotels in the region are packed. *—PTI*

Firefighters battle the flames the ski resort PHOTO: X

Colombia likely to declare emergency as rebels kill 80

BOGOTA, 21 JAN

Colombian president Gustavo Petro aims to declare a state of emergency on Monday, following a spate of guerrilla attacks in the country's northeast that has killed over 80 people and forced thousands to flee their homes.

In a message on X, Petro said he will "declare a state of internal commotion," a measure that enables the executive branch to pass certain kinds of legislation without congressional approval for three months but cannot be used to suspend congress or eliminate civil rights.

Petro, who was a member of a guerrilla group during his youth, initiated peace talks with the militant group, ELN, in 2022, after promising in his campaign that he could get them to demobilise within three months of taking office.

Army sent 5,000 soldiers to Norte de Santander to reinforce security in mountains PHOTO: X

On Friday, however, Petro suspended negotiations after violence escalated. "The ELN has chosen the path of war, and that's what they will get," Petro posted on X, in which he accused the rebels of turning into a drug trafficking group and compared their methods to those of Pablo Escobar.

Petro had warned that his nation's military will take offensive actions. The new wave of violence has displaced 18,300 people. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Gold rises ₹ 100 to ₹ 82,100; silver quotes flat

NEW DELHI, 21 JAN

Gold prices rose Rs 100 to Rs 82,100 per 10 grams in the national capital on Tuesday, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The precious metal had closed at Rs 82,000 per 10 grams on Monday. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity increased by Rs 100 to Rs 81,700 per 10 grams. It had settled at Rs 81,600 per 10 grams in the previous trading session. However, silver prices traded flat at Rs 93,000 per kg on Tuesday. Meanwhile, in futures trade on the MCX, gold contracts for February delivery appreciated Rs 426 or 0.54 per cent to trade at Rs 78,970 per 10 grams on Tuesday

Silver futures for March delivery also rose Rs 188 or 0.21 per cent to Rs 91,630 per kg on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX).—*PTI*

Rupee falls 14P to close at 86.59 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 21 JAN

The rupee pared initial gains and settled for the day lower by 14 paise to 86.59 (provisional) against US dollar on Tuesday, tracking heavy sell-off in the domestic equity market and a recovery in the US dollar index. Forex traders said the dollar weakened from its 109 levels but clawed back to 108.66 as Donald Trump declared tariffs against Canada and Mexico in the near future but stopped short of declaring any tariffs against China. Rupee is expected to see high volatility ahead of key events in the global and domestic economic landscape, they added. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened on a positive note at 86.28 against the greenback. During the day, the local unit touched an intraday high of 86.28 and a low of 86.59. It finally closed at 86.59 (provisional), registering a fall of 14 paise over its previous close of 86.45 against the US dollar. —*PTI*

Sensex crashes 1,235 points to 7-month low

This comes after US Prez Trump announced tarrifs

Nifty plunges 320.10 points to close at 23,024.65 PHOTO: PTI

MUMBAI, 21 JAN

Benchmark Sensex tanked 1,235 points to settle at more than seven-month low due to an across-the-board selloff triggered by global trade war worries after US President Donald Trump announced tariffs on neighbouring countries on his inauguration day.

The 30-share BSE Sensex plummeted 1,235.08 points or 1.60 per cent to settle at 75,838.36 dragged by losses in ICICI Bank and Reliance Industries. During the day, the BSE benchmark plummeted 1,431.57 points or 1.85 per cent to hit an intraday low of 75,641.87.

The broader NSE Nifty plunged 320.10 points or 1.37 per cent to close at 23,024.65. In the intraday trade, the NSE Nifty plunged 367.9 points or 1.57 per cent to 22,976.85.

Among Sensex shares, Zomato, NTPC, Adani Ports, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, Reliance Industries, Mahindra & Mahindra, Bajaj Finance, Tech Mahindra and Axis Bank were the major laggards.

UltraTech Cement and HCL Technologies were the only gainers. Global oil benchmark Brent crude slipped 0.76 per cent to USD 79.54 a barrel. —*PTI*

ZOMATO & SWIGGY SHARES CONTINUE TO SLUMP

NEW DELHI, 21 JAN

BShares of food tech unicorn Zomato plummeted 12 per cent in the morning trade on Tuesday after the food delivery aggregator reported a 57.2 per cent drop in consolidated net profit for the December quarter to Rs 59 crore.

The scrip of the company fell 11.81 per cent to Rs 212.50 apiece on the BSE.

On the NSE, shares of Gurugram-headquartered Zomato depreciated by 9.99 per cent to hit its lower circuit level of Rs 215.80 per piece.

On Monday, shares of Zomato settled more than 3 per cent lower on the bourses.

In two days, the company's market capitalisation (mcap) got eroded by Rs 35,175.53 crore to Rs 2,04,876.94 crore.

Meanwhile, shares of Swiggy also declined over 10 per cent on the stock exchanges after its peer competitor Zomato reported a slowdown in its business.

On the BSE, Swiggy's shares depreciated 10.47 per cent to trade at Rs 428.85 apiece. The scrip of the company decreased 9.91 per cent to Rs 431.70 per share on the National Stock Exchange (NSE).

Further, this is the biggest single-day drop for Swiggy's shares since its listing last year.

Shares of Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) slumped 12 per cent after company's December quarter earnings failed to cheer investors. —*PTI*

JIO BLACKROCK BROKING

Jio Financial Services & BlackRock set up broking unit

MUMBAI, 21 JAN

Jio Financial Services Ltd (JFSL) has announced the establishment of a new subsidiary, Jio BlackRock Broking Private Limited. The wholly owned entity, formed under its joint venture with BlackRock, aims to venture into broking activities, subject to obtaining the necessary regulatory approvals. The announcement was made through an exchange filing on 20 January.

The joint venture, Jio BlackRock Investment Advisers Private Limited, was incorporated in September 2024. Both Jio Financial Services and BlackRock have contributed an initial investment of Rs 3 crore each into the venture.

In a separate announcement on Friday, Jio Financial Services reported a steady consolidated profit of Rs 295 crore for the third quarter ending December 2024, compared to Rs 294 crore in the same period last year. For the second quarter of the current fiscal year, the company's consolidated net profit stood at Rs 689 crore.

Total income for the third quarter rose to Rs 449 crore, marking an increase from Rs 414 crore in the corresponding quarter of the previous fiscal year. However, expenses also surged year-on-year, reaching Rs 131 crore from Rs 99 crore.

On the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE), Jio Financial Services' share price opened at Rs 277.25 apiece on Tuesday. The stock recorded an intraday high of Rs 277.55 and a low of Rs 265.55 during trading hours.

The launch is expected to bolster JFSL's position in the financial services sector, reflecting its commitment to innovation and expansion. —*Agencies*

Govt disburses ₹1,596 cr in 6 PLI schemes this fiscal

NEW DELHI, 21 JAN

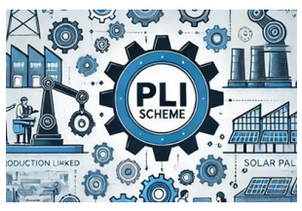


PHOTO: X

The government has disbursed Rs 1,596 crore under Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes for six sectors, including electronics and pharma, during the April-September this fiscal, an official said.

The government in 2021 announced PLI schemes for 14 sectors such as telecommunication, white goods, textiles, manufacturing of medical devices, automobiles, speciality steel, food products, high-efficiency solar PV modules, advanced chemistry cell battery, drones, and pharma with an outlay of Rs 1.97 lakh crore.

Out of the total Rs 1,596 crore, the maximum amount of Rs 964 crore was disbursed under the PLI scheme for large-scale electronics manufacturing.

It was followed by pharma (Rs 604 crore), food products (Rs 11 crore), telecom (Rs 9 crore), bulk drugs (Rs 6 crore) and drones (Rs 2 crore).

The anchor units that will be built in every sector will require a new supplier base in the entire value chain. Most of these ancillary units will be built in the MSME sector.

Further as of August 2024, across 14 sectors, investment of Rs 1.46 lakh crore have been realised, which has resulted in incremental production/sales of over Rs 12.50 lakh crore, employment generation of over 9.5 lakhs, and exports surpassing Rs 4 lakh crore. —*PTI*

LARGEST TRASMISSION ORDER

Adani Energy gets ₹25K cr Bhadla-Fatehpur project

NEW DELHI, 21 JAN

PHOTO: PTI

Adani Energy Solutions Ltd (AESL) on Tuesday announced securing Bhadla-Fatehpur HVDC Project worth Rs 25,000 crore, which is the largest transmission order ever won by the Adani Group entity.

With the latest win, its order book now stands at Rs 54,761 crore, AESL said in an exchange filing.

The project will evacuate 6 GW of renewable energy from Rajasthan to demand centres in the north.

The company said it is the largest order win till date, taking AESL's under-execution order book to Rs 54,761 crore and transmission network to 25,778 ckm and 84,186 MVA transformation capacity.

The company aims to deliver the project in 4.5 years.

AESL won the project under Tariff Based Competitive Bidding (TBCB) mechanism and REC Power Development & Consultancy Ltd (RECPDCL) was the bid process coordinator.

The project SPV got formally transferred to AESL on January 20, 2025.

The project includes establishment of a 6,000-MW HVDC system between Bhadla and Fatehpur (2,400 ckm) along with 7,500 MVA transmission capacity.

AESL, part of the Adani portfolio, is a multidimensional organisation with presence in various facets of the energy domain, namely power transmission, distribution, smart metering, and cooling solutions. It is the country's largest private transmission company. —*PTI*

PHOTO: X

'POSSIBILITY OF MORE US ENERGY COMING TO INDIA'

NEW DELHI, 21 JAN

There is a possibility of more US energy coming to India in the wake of the new administration under President Donald Trump announcing plans to maximise oil and gas production, Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Tuesday said.

The number of India's oil suppliers has already gone up from 27 to 39 and "if more oil comes in, this is something that we welcome", Puri, the Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas, told reporters on the sidelines of auto industry body SIAM's 3rd International Symposium for Thriving Eco-Energy in Mobility event.

He was responding to a query about new US President Donald Trump's steps to increase oil drilling and gas production.

Stating that the Indian government is "watching very carefully" the announcements made so far by the new US administration under Trump, Puri said, "It is clear, as I have shared with you many times, that more and more energy is coming on the market. I think that's a given. I have said all along that if you look at what's happening in the global energy scene, there is no shortage of oil. That is also very clear."

The minister said more oil is coming from the US, Brazil, Guyana Suriname and Canada in the western hemisphere while hinting at a drop in prices.

Puri, however, declined to comment on the new US government's decision to pull out of the 2015 Paris climate agreement. —*PTI*

ZF introduces digital fleet platform in India

NEW DELHI, 21 JAN

Auto component maker ZF on Tuesday said it has introduced a digital fleet management platform, SCALAR, in the Indian market. Designed to address diverse customer needs, the platform offers features to optimise the operations of commercial fleets, enhancing efficiency, safety, and sustainability for both passenger and cargo transport. The company launched the platform at the Bharat Mobility Expo 2025. "The platform provides advanced capabilities that enhance fleet productivity while reducing operational costs, whether it's for cargo or passenger applications," Van Raemdonck Hjalmar, Head of Digital Solutions Business, CVS Division, ZF Group stated —*PTI*

SEBI to allow pre-listing IPO trading: Buch

MUMBAI, 21 JAN

PHOTO: PTI

SEBI is looking at introducing a system where an investor can sell shares as soon as they are allotted in an Initial Public Offering (IPO) to curb grey market activity, chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch said on Tuesday.

The chief of the capital markets regulator also announced that the top two proxy advisory firms are on the verge of launching a portal which will be a repository of related party transactions and will be useful in judging the governance standards in a company for any stakeholder.

It can be noted that many IPOs in the recent past have seen very high subscriptions, and many of the issuances have also made huge listing-day gains which result in the grey market activity of passing on allotted shares.

Buch, an i-banker turned markets regulator, reminisced that during her banking days, this grey market activity used to be called "curb trading".

Buch said discussions are underway with two stock exchanges to put in place the "when listed" facility where shares can be traded during the three days between the allotment and listing.

On the plans of proxy advisors to launch the Related Party Transactions (RPT) portal, the SEBI chief said the two major entities in the fray are on the verge of launching the facility.

Buch said proxy firms play an important role in the market and attributed their success to the reliance on the subscriber pays model rather than issuer paying. —*PTI*

Euro Pratik files draft papers with SEBI for Rs 730 cr IPO

NEW DELHI, 21 JAN

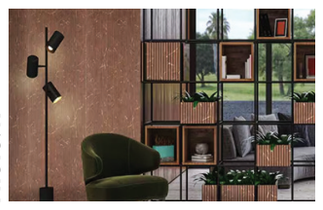


PHOTO: X

Euro Pratik, a prominent player in the decorative wall panel industry, has filed draft papers with the markets regulator SEBI seeking its approval to float an Initial Public Offering (IPO) worth Rs 730 crore.

The IPO is entirely an Offer For Sale (OFS) by promoters. It includes a subscription reservation for eligible employees, according to the Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP) filed on Monday.

Euro Pratik is a leading player in India's decorative wall panel industry, commanding nearly 16 per cent market share by revenue in the organised segment, according to Technopak Report.

Over the years, it has developed an extensive product range catering to both residential and commercial applications which are predominantly sold under its flagship brands "Euro Pratik" and "Gloirio".

The company operates on an asset-light model. It outsources manufacturing to contract partners across South Korea, China, and the USA.

Key acquisitions include Vougue Decor, Euro Pratik Laminate LLP, Millenium Decor, EuroPratik Intex LLP, and Euro Pratik USA, LLC, which have significantly enhanced its portfolio. —*PTI*

Table Space appoints Karan, Kunal as co-CEOs

NEW DELHI, 21 JAN

Table Space, which provides managed office spaces, has appointed two of its co-founders Karan Chopra and Kunal Mehra as co-CEOs. The appointment follows the demise of its founder Amit Banerji on 6 January. Banerji was about 45 years old. In a statement on Tuesday, Table Space said Karan Chopra will additionally take up the responsibility of being Chairman of the Board of Directors. Table Space's portfolio comprises 10.5 million sq ft (100.5 lakh sq ft) of custom workspaces for enterprises as of December 2024, with over 70 centres across seven key cities in India. —*PTI*

TRADE EXPERTS OPINE

'India should retaliate if US hikes duties'

NEW DELHI, 21 JAN

PHOTO: X

India should respond with equal measures if the newly elected US President Donald Trump would impose higher tariffs on domestic goods, trade experts say.

They noted that India has previously implemented retaliatory customs duties on several US products, such as apples, in response to what it deemed "illegal" tariffs imposed by America on certain steel and aluminium products.

In December last year, Trump has said India charges "a lot" of tariffs, reiterating his intention to impose reciprocal tariffs in retaliation for what New Delhi will impose on the import of certain American products.

In 2018, when the US taxed Indian steel and aluminium, India retaliated by raising tariffs on 29 US products, recovering equivalent revenue.

Sharing similar views, international trade expert Abhijit Das said that additional duties by the US, if implemented, will lock the market for Indian goods.

Trade experts further stated that Trump's claim that India is an "abuser" of import tariffs is unfair as many nations including America protect their domestic industries by imposing high customs duties on certain products. In October 2020 also, Trump labelled India as the 'tariff king'.

According to WTO's World Tariff Profiles 2023, the US also imposes high duties on items like dairy products (188 per cent), fruits and vegetables (132 per cent), coffee, tea, cocoa and spices (53 per cent), cereals and food preparations (193 per cent), oilseeds, fats and oils (164 per cent), beverages and tobacco (150 per cent), fish and fish products (35 per cent), minerals and metals (187 per cent), and chemicals (56 per cent). —*PTI*

India & Belgium explore boosting pharma, agri trade

NEW DELHI, 21 JAN

PHOTO: PTI

India and Belgium have agreed to establish mechanisms to resolve trade issues in areas such as pharma and agri products to boost bilateral trade, according to an official statement issued on Tuesday.

The issues were discussed during the meeting between Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade Bernard Quintin, in Brussels.

It said that the two ministers agreed to establish stronger mechanisms for resolving trade issues.

The leaders also discussed the progress of the EU-India Free Trade Agreement (FTA) talks and emphasised the importance of prioritising trade issues to streamline negotiations and strengthen economic ties.

Emerging sectors such as renewable energy, life sciences, infrastructure, digital technologies, and food products were highlighted as key areas of collaboration between the two countries.

Belgium recognised importance of engaging with India as a strategic partner to diversify its relationships. —*ANI*

PHOTO: PTI

Buttler backs family presence during tours

KOLKATA, 21 JAN

As Indian players gear up for reduced time with families during lengthy tours abroad owing to a BCCI diktat, England captain Jos Buttler on Tuesday said having partners and children on long overseas assignments is "really important" and does not affect the game "too much". Limited time with family members on tours was a contentious clause in the BCCI's recently circulated 10-point disciplinary policy for players. India's Test and ODI skipper Rohit Sharma has already voiced his apprehension with the clause that allows families no more than two weeks on tours exceeding 45 days. "... that's a loaded question, isn't it?" Buttler said on the eve of the five-match series against the Suryakumar Yadav-led Indian T20 side, seemingly well aware of the current turmoil following a disastrous Test tour of Australia.—*PTI*

Women's ICC rankings: Mandhana gains a spot

DUBAI, 21 JAN

India opener Smriti Mandhana inched closer to the top position, climbing to the second spot in the latest ICC women's ODI batting rankings following a stellar series against Ireland. Mandhana, the only Indian in the top 10, had blasted 135 in the third ODI, besides scoring 41 and 73 in the opening and second games. The 28-year-old currently has 738 points to her name, while South Africa's Laura Wolvaardt is at the top, followed by Sri Lanka's Chamari in the third place. Jemimah Rodrigues, who scored her maiden hundred in the second ODI against Ireland—*PTI*

PHOTO: X

Haas appoints Laura as F1's first female race engineer

NORTH CAROLINA , 21 JAN

Haas has appointed Laura Mueller as the first female race engineer in Formula 1. Mueller will be working with French driver Esteban Ocon this year, Haas said on Tuesday. Race engineers have a very visible role in F1 since they're on the radio to drivers during races and those messages are broadcast. Haas was seventh in the constructor standings last year and has a new lineup with Ocon and Ollie Bearman. Mueller was promoted from her role as a performance engineer. The German has been with Haas since 2022."She's a pretty determined character," Haas team principal Ayao was quoted as saying on the F1 website.—*PTI*

Man City completes transfer of teenager prodigy Vitor

LONDON, 21 JAN

Manchester City completed the signing of Brazilian defender Vitor Reis on a four-and-half-year contract, the Premier League side confirmed on Tuesday. The 19-year-old Brazilian youth international was a regular captain on his journey through Palmeiras' youth ranks. Reis made his senior debut in June 2024 and went on to be a key part of the team as they finished runners-up in the Brazilian Serie A. He played 22 times for his boyhood club, including 18 games in the league and two matches in the Copa Libertadores. "I'm excited to join Manchester City, one of the biggest clubs in the world. Everyone has seen the amazing achievements in recent seasons.—*PTI*

Novak beats Alcaraz to reach Aus Open semis

37-year-old Djokovic, seeded seventh, is chasing his 25th Grand Slam title

MELBOURNE 21 JAN

Novak Djokovic extended his lead over Carlos Alcaraz and registered a massive win in the quarterfinal of the Australian Open. Despite losing the first set 4-6, Djokovic bounced back in style to clinch the next three sets - 6-4, 6-3, and 6-4 to reach the semi-final. Meanwhile, he stepped up on occasion once again and stamped his authority over Carlos Alcaraz to clinch back-to-back sets.

The young Spaniard ran out of ideas in the third set as Djokovic completely dominated him to clinch it 6-3. The Serbian clinched the second set to level the quarter-final and didn't stop there and made sure Alcaraz felt some heat by winning another set to take the lead. He is putting up another legendary performance here despite the groin discomfort.

Meanwhile, Alcaraz made a succession of errors in the second set and the 37-year-old Djokovic sent a backhand winner down the line to level the match.Earlier, Alcaraz clinched the first set 6-4 here as he came from behind to clinch it. Minutes after Djokovic returns from his medical timeout, with his groin taped, Alcaraz serves out the first set with a blistering 190 km/h ace, perfectly placed to leave the 24-time Grand Slam champion no chance of a return. The two superstars are putting up a show here with some high-quality tennis on display. Novak Djokovic took the early advantage, but Alcaraz soon matched the beats to level it 2-2. The quarter-final has lived up to the hype so far. It is a proper heavyweight clash to decide one spot in the men's singles semi-finals of the 2025 Australian Open as 10-time champion Djokovic faces third seed, Carlos Alcaraz. The 37-year-old Djokovic, seeded seventh, is chasing his 25th Grand Slam title while 21-year-old Alcaraz, already a winner of four Majors. —*PTI*

BOPANNA-ZHANG PAIR EXITS AUSTRALIAN OPEN

NEW DELHI, 21 JAN

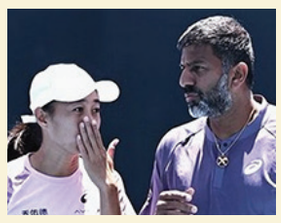


PHOTO: X

Rohan Bopanna and Shuai Zhang had a match point in the Super Tie-break. Still, they could not close out the mixed doubles quarterfinals in their favor as local wild cards John Peers and Olivia Gadecki emerged winners in an exciting contest at the Australian Open here on Tuesday. Bopanna and Zhang lost 6-2 4-6 9-11 in one hour and eight minutes at Kia Arena, bringing curtains to India's campaign at the season's first Grand Slam. —*PTI*

Delay due to feather irks Zverev

MELBOURNE 21 JAN

Alexander Zverev was bothered by an officiating call caused by a bird's feather during his quarterfinal win over Tommy Paul at the Australian Open. Both players found it hard to let go of a previous, more obvious miss. The second-seeded Zverev was down 4-2 in the second set Tuesday when Paul saved two break points. With the game in the balance, chair umpire Nacho Forcadell called a let and ordered a replay of a point when he saw a white feather drop into Zverev's eye line as the German player was in his backswing.

After completing a 7-6 (1), 7-6 (0), 2-6, 6-1 victory, Zverev laughed when asked about the feather, saying he'd never heard of it happening before. —*PTI*

Coco Gauff loses to Paula Badosa

MELBOURNE 21 JAN

Coco Gauff's forehand and serve abandoned her in the worst way and at the worst time at the Australian Open on Tuesday, and the No. 3-seeded American was eliminated in the quarterfinals by No. 11 Paula Badosa of Spain 7-5, 6-4.

Gauff entered the match at Rod Laver Arena with a 9-0 record in 2025 and on a 13-match winning streak that dated to her title at the WTA Finals in November. Using tweaks to some keystrokes to great effect in the hopes of earning a second Grand Slam title at age 20, the 2023 U.S. Open champion had only dropped one set through four matches at Melbourne Park this year.

"She's full of confidence. But I'm playing well, too," Badosa said.

U19 WC

Vaishnavi powers India to 10-wkt win over Malaysia

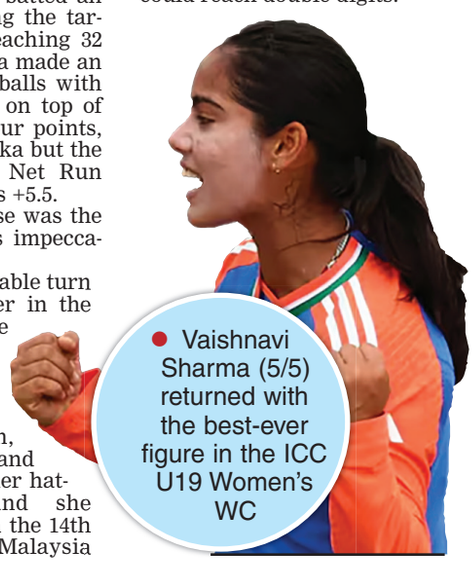
KUALA LUMPUR, 21 JAN

Debutant left-arm spinner Vaishnavi Sharma (5/5) returned with the best-ever figure in the ICC U19 Women's World Cup, including a hat-trick, to fashion India's 10-wicket romp over Malaysia here on Tuesday.

Vaishnavi and fellow left-arm spinner Ayushi Shukla (3/8) ran through Malaysia's batting line-up, bundling out the hosts for a paltry 31 in 14.3 overs. India barely batted an eyelid while chasing the target in 2.5 overs, reaching 32 for no loss. G Trisha made an unbeaten 27 off 12 balls with five fours. India is on top of their group with four points, the same as Sri Lanka but the former has better Net Run Rate +9.1 to Lanka's +5.5.

But that easy chase was the fruit of Vaishnavi's impeccable spell.

There was appreciable turn and bounce on offer in the pitch here, and she used it to the hilt as the home side batters had no answers to her guile. Nur Ain Binti Roslan, Nur Isma Dania, and Siti Nazwah were her hat-trick victims, and she achieved the feat in the 14th over, which saw Malaysia further stumbling from 24 for six to 30 for nine. "This was a dream debut to get a hat-trick and five-wicket haul. My journey has had its ups and downs. "I look up to Radha Yadav (India's senior left-arm spinner) and Ravindra Jadeja. I had visualized how to get wickets here last night," said Vaishnavi after the match. Earlier, she had the wickets of Malaysia skipper Nur Syuhada and Nuriman as none of the home side batters could reach double digits.



Vaishnavi Sharma (5/5) returned with the best-ever figure in the ICC U19 Women's WC

India eye fresh start against England

KOLKATA, 21 JAN

MATCH STARTS: 7 PM

India's team attends a practice session ahead of their first Twenty20 international cricket match against England at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata PHOTO: PTI

Fit-again pacer Mohammed Shami's comeback will be keenly watched when the Suryakumar Yadav-led Indian T20 team takes on an evenly-matched England in a five-match series starting here on Wednesday, aiming to make up for the recent Test disasters that have caused considerable turmoil and heartbreak. The white-ball rubber, comprising five T20Is and three ODIs after that, presents an ideal platform for both teams to experiment with combinations and assess form before next month's Champions Trophy. emerged as India's leading wicket-taker in the ODI World Cup 2023 with 24 scalps, including a sensational 7/57 in the semifinal against New Zealand at the Wankhede.

With pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah nursing a back injury and his Champions Trophy participation doubtful, Shami's comeback assumes greater significance.

With the Rohit Sharma-led Indian Test set-up still reeling from a horror tour of Australia, a good performance from the T20 side has become imperative especially after the Board had to step in to reinforce diktats on team discipline.

All-rounder Axar Patel will debut as India's vice-captain in the T20I format.

He has been rewarded for his stellar all-round contributions in India's triumphant T20 World Cup campaign in the Caribbean last year.

Axar played a crucial knock of 47 off 31 balls in the final against South Africa and took nine wickets at an average of 19.22 across eight matches.

For the Jos Buttler-led England, the series marks a new chapter under head coach Brendon McCullum, who signed a three-year contract following Matthew Mott's resignation following their T20 World Cup exit. It would not be a new territory for the New Zealand great, who was also at the helm of Kolkata Knight Riders after playing for the franchise in the inaugural IPL. Like Shami, England's fiery pacer Jofra Archer will be under the spotlight as he returns from injury to lead their pace attack ahead of the Champions Trophy. conditions in India, with the possibility of heavy evening dew, could pose a challenge for bowlers. The squad also includes pace bowler Mark Wood from a right elbow injury. —*PTI*

INDIA VS ENGLAND HEAD TO HEAD

MATCHES PLAYED -24

INDIA	ENGLAND
WON-13	WON-11
LOST-11	LOST-13

NOT MUST TO NAME HOST ON KIT: BCCI

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has reacted to the Indian jersey controversy ahead of the ICC Champions Trophy 2025. As per the reports in RevSportz, the governing body said it is not mandatory to have the name of the host nation on the kit. The India National Cricket Team and the Pakistan National Cricket Team became part of another controversy ahead of the ICC Champions Trophy 2025. claimed that the BCCI has denied printing the host nation's (Pakistan) name on their jersey. As per the protocol of the International Cricket Council (ICC), all the teams have to write the name of the host nation on their jersey. Pakistan Cricket Board officials reacted to the reports, saying that the BCCI is trying to bring politics into the matter. —PTI

CHAMPIONS TROPHY PREPARATIONS ON SCHEDULE: PCB

KARACHI, 21 JAN

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) allayed fears about the readiness of the venues for this year's Champions Trophy as it welcomed media for a tour of stadiums in Lahore and Karachi on Monday. The eight-team 50-over event will be the first global tournament to be held in Pakistan in 28 years. India, however, will play all their matches in Dubai due to the hostile relationship between the two countries. Stadiums in Lahore, Karachi, and Rawalpindi are being upgraded and if the tournament is successful more could follow in a country deemed unsafe following a 2009 attack on touring Sri Lankan cricketers. —*PTI*

Tata chess: Praggnanandhaa beats Arjun

WIJK AAN ZEE, 21 JAN

PHOTO: PTI

Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa scored a finely-crafted victory over compatriot Arjun Erigaisi to share the lead with Uzbek Nodirbek Abdusattorov after the third round of the Tata Steel Chess Tournament here.

Both Praggnanandhaa and Abdusattorov have 2.5 points each.

It an excellent day for the 19-year-old Indian as he handled the Catalan opening to perfection, getting a tiny advantage and squeezing out the defensive resources right from the early middle game stage.

After the trade of Queens, the players reached a rook and knight endgame wherein Erigaisi's fractured pawns on the queenside came under scrutiny.

Slow maneuvering ensued and Praggnanandhaa methodically won a pawn on the king-side before his rooks came in to play from the other flank.

The game lasted 60 moves handing Erigaisi his second defeat in three days after his opening-round loss to another compatriot P Harikrishna.

World Champion D Gukesh had it easy as white as he played out a draw with top seed Fabiano Caruana of the United States to take himself to two points out of a possible three in the first major chess tournament of the year.

Playing with white, was a rare game by Gukesh as he decided against taking any risks. The Queen pawn opening to expand his king-side pawns. —*PTI*

B'LURU EYE RETURN TO WINNING WAYS AGAINST ODISHA

BENGALURU, 21 JAN

Bengaluru FC would be keen to return to winning ways when they host a defensively struggling Odisha FC in their Indian Super League match here on Wednesday.

The Juggernauts are currently seventh on the table with 21 points from 16 games, while the Blues sit third with 28 points from as many matches as the Sergio Lobera-coached team.

Odisha FC have won once and drawn twice in their last five games and will eye registering their first league double over Bengaluru FC, following their 4-2 victory in the reverse fixture on December 1.

Bengaluru FC, on the other hand, have struggled recently, losing their last home game 0-1 to Mohammedan SC on January 11, 2025, followed by a 1-1 draw to Hyderabad FC on the road. A loss in this match would mark their first back-to-back home defeats in over two years.

The Blues will look to bounce back and stay in the hunt for the first spot. —*PTI*

PREMIER LEAGUE

Chelsea bags 3-1 victory over Wolves

LONDON, 21 JAN

Tosin Adarabioyo scores first Premier League goal as Chelsea defeat Wolves 3-1 at Stamford Bridge PHOTO: @CHELSEAFC / X

Chelsea ended a five-game winless run in the Premier League by beating Wolverhampton 3-1 to move above Newcastle and Manchester City into fourth place.

Tosin Adarabioyo put the home side ahead after 24 minutes when he scored from close range after Reece James's shot was deflected into his path six meters from goal. It was his third goal in three games after a recent double in the FA Cup against Morecambe.

Wolves were on the back foot for most of the first half but grabbed an equalizer in stoppage time with the help of a mistake by Chelsea keeper Robert Sanchez. Amid a flurry of pushing and shoving, Sánchez dropped a corner kick at the feet of Matt Doherty who stabbed the ball home from a meter out.

However, a revamped Chelsea, with James making a first league start since Nov 3 and Trevoh Chalobah impressing after his unexpected recall from loan club Crystal Palace, was too strong for a Wolves side now winless in four league games.

Marc Cucurella made it 2-1 when he chested down a cross from the right and bundled the ball into the net on the hour mark. Five minutes later, Chalobah's goal-bound header was helped on by Noni Madueke as Chelsea put the game beyond doubt.

Madueke said he apologized to Chalobah for nicking his goal but defended his "attacker's instinct" for being in the right place at the right time to the ball crossed the line.

He also paid tribute to his teammate for showing "leadership, character (and) bravery on the ball." —*PTI*

Women's League: Sethu FC shocks Odisha FC 2-0

BHUBANESWAR, 21 JAN

PHOTO: PTI

Despite being a player down for the majority of the game, Sethu FC shocked Odisha FC 2-0 in their Indian Women's League match here on Tuesday.

Amnah Nababi scored for Sethu FC in the 69th and 82nd minutes of the match.

Sethu thus ended Odisha's unbeaten start to the league season as well as leapfrogged them on the table to second place. The result took their tally to seven points, while Odisha is now in fourth place with four points. Sethu were the ones who approached the game on the front foot, and even carved up the first chance of the game in the fourth minute, a corner headed wide at the far post narrowly. Their attacks continued relentlessly at Odisha, who looked shell-shocked and were for large parts of the opening 15 minutes constrained in their half. The pattern of play flipped completely because of one moment of madness in the 20th minute. As Jennifer Yeboah, having received the ball 30 yards from the goal, drove towards the goal, she was brought down by Anu Sabu. —*PTI*